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ABSTRACT

This report extrapolates basic implications from work being done by pioneer initiatives to reform education support initiatives. Pioneer initiatives around the United States are demonstrating the need to rethink how schools and communities can meet the challenge of addressing persistent barriers to student learning. This report stresses the need to expand school reform, restructuring education support programs under the umbrella of a reform component that focuses directly on barriers to learning and development. The pioneer initiatives discussed in this report show how to use this type of enabling component and then restructure education programs from the school outward. Descriptions are given of the work of the Memphis, Tennessee City Schools, the Detroit, Michigan Public Schools, and the Los Angeles Unified School District, California. Other programs highlight reform efforts in Hawaii, Washington, and California, as well as the Urban Learning Center of the New American Schools Comprehensive School Reform Model. Appendixes list conference participants, discuss expanding the framework for school accountability, and present an example of standards for an enabling component. (Contains 216 references.) (SLD)

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Mental Health in Schools
Center
Training and Technical Assistance

A Center Report . . .

Pioneer Initiatives to Reform Education Support Programs

June, 2000

The center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Department of Psychology, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563 Phone: (310) 825-3634.

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School systems are not responsible
for meeting every need of their students.
But when the need directly affects learning,
the school must meet the challenge.

Carnegie Council Task Force (1989)

Executive Summary

On Monday, May 22, 2000, a group of leaders involved in pioneer initiatives to reform and restructure education support programs participated in a day-long "summit" meeting at UCLA. This report extrapolates basic implications from work being done by such initiatives.

School systems are not responsible for meeting every need of their students.

But when the need directly affects learning, the school must meet the challenge.

Carnegie Council Task Force (1989)

Policy makers are calling for higher standards and greater accountability for instruction, improved curricula, better teaching, increased discipline, reduced school violence, an end to social promotion, and more. At the same time, it is evident that current strategies to accomplish all this are inadequate to the task. This is likely to remain the case as long as so little attention is paid to reforming and restructuring the ways schools address many well-known factors interfering with the performance and learning of so many young people.

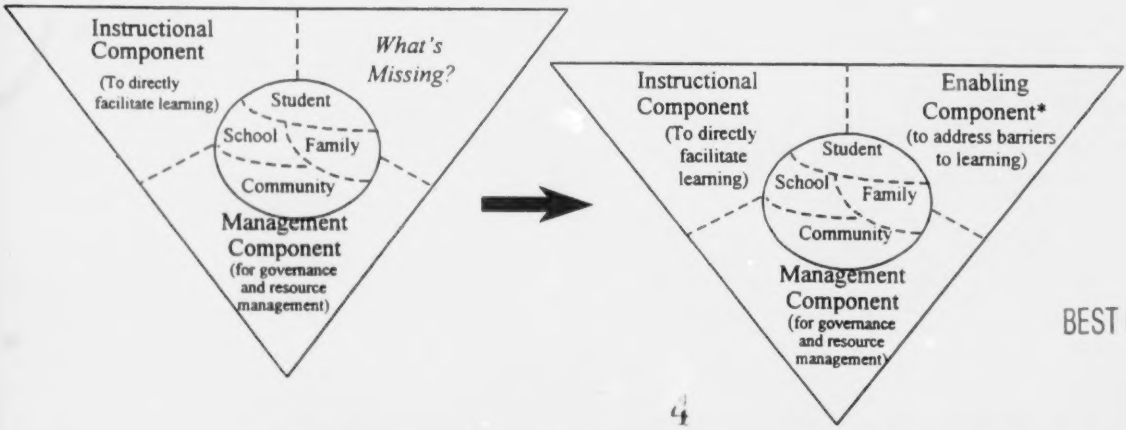
Pioneer initiatives around the country are demonstrating the need to rethink how schools and communities can meet the challenge of addressing persistent barriers to student learning. As a whole, their work underscores a reality that too few school reformers have acted upon. Namely:

> *If our society truly means to provide the opportunity for all students to succeed at school, fundamental changes are needed so that schools and communities can effectively address barriers to development and learning.*

Based particularly on the work of several comprehensive initiatives, the report stresses the need to expand school reform (see figure below). These initiatives are restructuring education support programs under the umbrella of a newly conceived reform component that focuses directly on addressing barriers to learning and development. This component is to be fully integrated with the others and assigned equal priority in policy and practice.

The notion of barriers to learning encompasses external and internal factors. It is clear that too many youngsters are growing up and going to school in situations that not only fail to promote healthy development, but are antithetical to the process. Some also bring with them intrinsic conditions that make learning and performing difficult. As a result, youngsters at every grade level come to school unready to meet the setting's demands effectively.

Figure. Moving from a two to a three component model for reform and restructuring.


Instructional Component
(To directly facilitate learning)
What's Missing?
Student
School
Family
Community
Management Component
(for governance and resource management)
Instructional Component
(To directly facilitate learning)
Enabling Component*
(to address barriers to learning)
Student
School
Family
Community
Management Component
(for governance and resource management)

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*The third component (an enabling component) is established in policy and practice as primary and essential and is developed into a comprehensive approach by weaving together school and community resources.

Addressing barriers is not at odds with the "paradigm shift" that emphasizes strengths, resilience, assets, and protective factors. Efforts to enhance positive development and improve instruction clearly can improve readiness to learn. However, it is frequently the case that preventing problems also requires direct action to remove or at least minimize the impact of barriers, such as hostile environments and intrinsic problems. Without an effective, direct intervention, such barriers can continue to get in the way of development and learning.

The concept of an enabling component embraces a focus on healthy development, prevention, and addressing barriers. Thus it is not a case of a negative vs. a positive emphasis (or excusing or blaming anyone). It's not about what's wrong vs. what's right with kids. It is about continuing to face up to the reality of major extrinsic barriers, as well as personal vulnerabilities and real disorders and disabilities.

In addressing barriers to student learning, the pioneering initiatives are improving school and classroom environments to prevent problems and enhance youngsters' strengths. At the same time, for those who need something more, school and community, working separately and together, provide essential supports and assistance.

Society has the responsibility to promote healthy development *and* address barriers.

The pioneer initiatives discussed in the report are showing how to:

- ***Use an enabling component***. In various forms, each has adopted the concept of an enabling component and is moving to develop comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approaches. Some use the term learning support component; others use learner support, supportive learning environment, or comprehensive student support system. Whatever the term, the focus is on developing a full array of programs and services by melding school, community, and home, resources. The aim is to develop a continuum ranging from primary prevention through early intervention to treatment of serious problems. At each school, creation of such a component involves programs to (a) enhance the ability of the classroom to enable learning, (b) provide support for the many transitions experienced by students and families, (c) increase home involvement, (d) respond to and prevent crises, (e) offer special assistance to students and their families, and (f) expand community involvement (with a special focus on the use of volunteers).

- ***Restructure education support programs from the school outward.*** For too long there has been a terrible disconnect between central office policy and operations and how programs and services evolve in classrooms and schools. The initiatives recognize that planning should begin with a clear image of what the classroom and school must do to teach all students effectively and enable learning by addressing barriers. Then, the focus moves to planning how a family of schools (e.g., a high school and its feeders) and the surrounding community can complement each other's efforts and achieve economies of scale. Central staff and state and national policy then are expected to restructure in ways that best support local efforts *as defined locally*.

The experiences of those who are revamping support programs also are highlighting a variety of other basic concerns about current practices, policy, and reforms. Extrapolating from the work done to date, greater attention is especially needed related to:

- ***Addressing barriers through a broader view of "basics" and through effective accommodation of learner differences.*** The curriculum in every classroom must emphasize acquisition of basic knowledge and skills. However, such basics must be understood to involve more than the three Rs and cognitive development. There are many essential areas of human development and functioning, and each contains "basics" that individuals need for success at school and in life. And, any individual may require special accommodation in one or more of these areas.
- ***Enhancing the focus on motivational considerations.*** Every classroom must incorporate a focus that appreciates the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in relation to learner readiness and ongoing involvement and that fosters intrinsic motivation as a basic outcome.
- ***Adding remediation as necessary, but only as necessary.*** Remedial procedures must be *added* to instructional programs for certain individuals, but only after appropriate nonremedial procedures for facilitating learning have been tried. Moreover, such procedures must be designed to build on strengths and must not supplant a continuing emphasis on promoting healthy development.
- ***Enhancing school-wide approaches.*** Beyond the classroom, schools must have policy, leadership, and mechanisms for school-wide programs to address barriers to learning and teaching. Some of this activity requires partnering with other schools, some requires weaving school and community resources together.
- ***Increasing policy cohesion and filling critical gaps.*** Relatedly, policymakers at all levels must revisit existing policy using the lens of addressing barriers to learning with the intent of both realigning enacted policy to foster cohesive practices and enacting new policies to fill critical gaps. However, given the realities of legislative bodies, additional mechanisms should be established quickly to facilitate appropriate blending of funds in pursuit of more comprehensive and multifaceted approaches for addressing barriers to learning and development and promoting healthy development.
- ***Expanding the framework for school accountability***. Besides focusing on high standards for academic performance, accountability must encompass all facets of a comprehensive and holistic approach to ensuring positive development and learning. Such expanded accountability incorporates high standards for learning related to social and personal functioning and for activity directly designed to address barriers to student learning. The former includes measures of social learning and behavior, character/values, civility, healthy and safe behavior, and other facets of youth development. The latter includes benchmark indicators such as increased attendance, reduced tardies, reduced misbehavior, less bullying and sexual harassment, increased family involvement with child and schooling, fewer referrals for specialized assistance, fewer referrals for special education, and fewer pregnancies, suspension, and dropouts.
- ***Improving scale-up efforts.*** After developing efficacious demonstrations of ways to reform education support programs, policymakers and administrators at all levels must be ready to pursue new and improved strategies in order to ensure substantive district-wide systemic changes.

Our Center hopes to continue to play a meaningful role in moving forward with the reform and restructuring of education support programs. As for the participants at the May 22nd summit, all indicated a desire to work more closely together to convey lessons learned, share data on progress, and provide technical assistance, training, and mutual support. Others already have indicated a desire to become part of this growing network. A listserv has been established as one direct linking mechanism. The work of the initiatives also should be available soon on their websites; other sharing strategies will be explored. All who receive this document, of course, are encouraged to copy and send it to superintendents, principals, school board members, and any others concerned about addressing barriers to learning.

*The full report and the accompanying materials can be downloaded from our website (http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu). Or the enclosed response form can be used to request hard copies. (It should be noted that the related costs are being underwritten by our Center and its funders.)

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Preface

Across the country it is evident that schools and communities are concerned about how to improve the way barriers to learning and development are addressed. The concern is reflected in efforts to promote such concepts as school linked services, coordinated and integrated services, full service schools, and community schools. From the perspective of many school professionals, none of these concepts captures the sense of the various interventions carried out by pupil services personnel and others who are employed by schools to carry out education support programs. And, from our perspective, such concepts tend to bypass the need for fundamental reform and restructuring of the resources of schools so that every school can evolve the type of comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approaches that can address barriers to development and learning.

Over the last decade, appreciation of the need to reform and restructure education support programs has emerged as a critical concern. On Monday, May 22, 2000, a group of leaders involved in pioneer initiatives participated in a day-long "summit" meeting. The session was conceived as part of an ongoing process to support and enhance such initiatives. Participants in the interchange (1) explored lessons learned, (2) clarified where the various initiatives are heading, (3) problem-solved around existing or anticipated difficulties, and (4) delineated ways in which such initiatives can continue to support each other and anyone else who is interested in similar reforms.

Represented were

- *Memphis City School*s – where the reform encompasses a comprehensive restructuring at all levels so that every school site can evolve a student support system that effectively addresses barriers to learning

- *Detroit Public Schools* – where schools are using the mechanism of a Resource Coordinating Team and the concept of an enabling component as a framework to develop an integrated "Learner Support System"

- *Los Angeles Unified School District* – where Organization Facilitators (systemic change agents) are enhancing Learning Supports at the school cluster level

- *Hawai'i Dept. of Education* – where a "Comprehensive Student Support System" (CSSS) is being developed throughout the state in ways that fully integrate with the instructional and management components at school sites

- *Washington State Office of Public Instruction* – where the concept of a "Supportive Learning Environment" is used to enhance and integrate school and community collaborations for student and family support

- *California Department of Education* – which uses the concept of "Learning Support" and is exploring how to enhance integration of its various education support systems

- *New American School's Urban Learning Center model* -- the only comprehensive school reform model to incorporate a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach to addressing barriers to learning.

This report is meant as a stimulus for moving forward with efforts across the country to reform and restructure education support programs. On the following pages, we provide a context for such work, attempt to distill the essence and richness of the above initiatives, and explore some next steps. In doing so, we recognize that summaries and analyses of such a diverse set of initiatives always are filtered through a personal lens; thus, we apologize for any errors of omission or commission.

Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor

Introduction

Ask any teacher:

On most days, how many of your students come to class motivationally ready and able to learn?

We've asked that question in conversations across the country. The consistency of response is surprising. In urban and rural schools serving economically disadvantaged families, teachers tell us they're lucky if 10-15% of their students fall into this group. In suburbia, teachers usually say 75% fit that profile.

* * * * *

If schools are to ensure that *all* students succeed, designs for reform must reflect the full implications of the word *all*. Clearly, *all* includes more than students who are motivationally ready and able to profit from the demands and expectations of "high standards." A commitment to all must also include the many who aren't benefitting from instructional reforms because of a host of *external* and *internal* barriers interfering with their development and learning.

Most learning, behavior, and emotional problems seen in schools are rooted in failure to address external barriers and learner differences in a comprehensive manner. And, the problems are exacerbated as youngsters internalize frustrations of confronting barriers and experience the debilitating effects of performing poorly at school.

How many are affected?

Figures vary. An estimate from the Center for Demographic Policy suggests that 40% of young people are in bad educational shape and therefore will fail to fulfill their promise. The reality for many large urban schools is that well-over 50% of their students manifest significant learning, behavior, and emotional problems. For a large proportion, the problems are rooted in the restricted opportunities and difficult living conditions associated with poverty.

The litany of barriers to learning is all too familiar to anyone who lives or works in communities where families struggle with low income. In such neighborhoods, school and community resources often are insufficient to the task of providing the type of basic (never mind enrichment) opportunities found in higher income communities. The resources also are inadequate for dealing with such threats to well-being and learning as health problems, difficult family circumstances, gangs, violence, and drugs. Inadequate attention to language and cultural considerations and to high rates of student mobility creates additional barriers not only to student learning but to efforts to involve families in youngsters' schooling. Such conditions are breeding grounds for frustration, apathy, alienation, and hopelessness.

It would be a mistake, however, to think only in terms of poverty. As recent widely-reported incidents underscore, violence is a specter hanging over all schools. And, while guns and killings capture media attention, other forms of violence affect and debilitate youngsters at every school. Even though there aren't good data, those who study the many faces of violence tell us that large numbers of students are caught up in cycles where they are the recipient or perpetrator (and sometimes both) of physical and sexual harassment ranging from excessive teasing and bullying to mayhem and major criminal acts.

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What Are Schools Doing to Address Barriers to Learning?

School policy makers have a long-history of trying to assist teachers in dealing with problems that interfere with school learning. Prominent examples are seen in school provided counseling, psychological, and health and social service programs. Policy has focused on enhancing school linkages with community service agencies and other neighborhood resources. Paralleling these efforts is a natural interest in promoting healthy development. Despite all this, it remains the case that too little is being done, and prevailing approaches are poorly conceived.

School-Owned Programs and Services

Almost all schools flirt with some forms of preventive and corrective activity focused on specific concerns, such as learning problems, substance abuse, violence, teen pregnancy, school dropouts, and delinquency. Some programs are provided throughout a school district, others are carried out at or linked to targeted schools. The interventions may be designed to benefit all students in a school, those in specified grades, and/or those identified as having special needs. The activities may be implemented in regular or special education classrooms and may be geared to an entire class, groups, or individuals; or they may be designed as "pull out" programs for designated students. They encompass ecological, curricular, and clinically oriented activities.

Most school-owned programs and services are offered by pupil services personnel. Federal and state mandates and special projects tend to determine how many pupil services professionals are employed. Governance of their daily practices usually is centralized at the school district level. In large districts, counselors, psychologists, social workers, and other specialists may be organized into separate units. Such units straddle regular, special, and compensatory education.

On paper, it looks like a lot. It is common knowledge, however, that few schools come close to having enough. Most offer only bare essentials. Too many schools can't even meet basic needs. Primary prevention really is only a dream. Analyses of the situation find that programs are planned, implemented, and evaluated in a piecemeal manner. Not only are they carried on in relative isolation of each other, a great deal of the work is oriented to discrete problems and overrelies on specialized services for individuals and small groups. In some schools, a student identified as at risk for grade retention, dropout, and substance abuse may be assigned to three counseling programs operating independently of each other. Such fragmentation not only is costly, it works against good results.

School-Community Collaborations

In recent years, renewed interest in school-community collaborations has included a focus on enhancing health, mental health, and social services for students and their families. State-wide initiatives are being tested across the country. The work has fostered such concepts as *school linked services, coordinated and integrated services, wrap-around services, one-stop shopping, full service schools,* and *community schools.* Where initiatives have incorporated a wellness model, youth development concepts such as *promoting protective factors, asset-building,* and *empowerment* also are in vogue.

Not surprisingly, early findings primarily indicate how hard it is to establish collaborations. Still, a reasonable inference from available data is that school-community partnerships can be successful and cost effective over the long-run. By placing staff at schools, community agencies make access easier for students and families -- especially those who usually are underserved and hard to reach. Such efforts not only provide services, they seem to encourage schools to open their doors in ways that enhance recreational, enrichment, and remedial opportunities and greater family involvement. Analyses of these programs suggest better outcomes are associated with empowering children and families, as well as with having the capability to address diverse constituencies and contexts. Many families using school-based centers become interested in contributing to school and community. They provide social support networks for new students and families, teach each other coping skills, participate in school governance, and help create a psychological sense of community. At the same time, the problem of fragmentation is compounded in many locales as community services are brought to school campuses. This happens because the prevailing approach is to coordinate *community* services and *link* them to schools in ways that *co-locate* rather than integrate them with the ongoing efforts of school staff.

Policymakers have come to appreciate the relationship between limited intervention efficacy and the widespread tendency for complementary programs to operate in isolation. Limited efficacy does seem inevitable as long as interventions are carried out in a piecemeal fashion. The call for "integrated" services clearly is motivated by a desire to reduce redundancy, waste, and ineffectiveness resulting from fragmentation.

But everything is marginalized!

Unfortunately, the focus on fragmentation ignores the overriding problem, namely that all efforts to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development are *marginalized* in policy and practice. Clearly, the majority of school counseling, psychological, and social service programs are viewed as supplementary -- often referred to as support or auxiliary services.

The degree to which marginalization is the case is seen in the lack of attention given such activity in school improvement plans and certification reviews. School policy makers deal with such programs on an ad hoc basis and continue to ignore the need for reform and restructuring in this arena. Community involvement also is a marginal concern at most schools.

In short, policies shaping current agendas for school and community reforms are seriously flawed. Although fragmentation is a significant problem, marginalization is the more fundamental concern. Yet concern about marginalization is not even on the radar screen of most policy makers.

Expanding School Reform

While higher standards and accountability are necessary ingredients in the final recipe for school reform, they are insufficient for turning around most schools that are in trouble. At such schools, overreliance on raising the bar and demands for rapid test score increases may even be counterproductive because they force attention away from addressing the multitude of overlapping factors that interfere with effective learning and teaching.

The present situation is one where, despite awareness of the many barriers to learning, education reformers continue to concentrate *mainly* on improving *instruction* (efforts to directly facilitate learning) and the *management and governance* of schools. Then, in the naive belief that a few health and social services will suffice in addressing barriers to learning, they talk of "integrated health and social services." And, in doing so, more attention has been given to linking sparse community services to school sites than to restructuring school programs and services designed to support and enable learning. The short shrift given to "support" programs and services by school reformers continues to marginalize activity that is essential to improving student achievement.

a continuum of interventions

Ultimately, addressing barriers to development and learning must be approached from a societal perspective and with fundamental systemic reforms. The reforms must lead to development of *a comprehensive, integrated continuum of programs*. Such a continuum must be multifaceted and woven into three overlapping school-community systems: namely, *systems of prevention*; *systems of early intervention* to address problems as soon after onset as feasible; and *systems of care* for those with chronic and severe problems (see Figure 1). All of this encompasses an array of programmatic activity to (a) enhance regular classroom strategies in ways that improve instruction for students with mild-to-moderate behavior and learning problems, (b) assist students and their families in negotiating the many school-relevant transitions, (c) increase home and community involvement in schools and schooling, (d) respond to and prevent crises, and (e) facilitate student and family access to specialized services when necessary. While schools can't do everything needed, they must play a much greater role in developing the programs and systems that are essential if *all* students are to benefit from higher standards and improved instruction.

Establishing an effective comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach for addressing barriers to development and learning requires cohesive policy that facilitates the blending of resources. In schools, this includes restructuring to combine parallel efforts supported by general funds, compensatory and special education entitlements, safe and drug free school grants, and specially funded projects. In communities, the need is for better ways of connecting agency and other resources to each other and to schools. The aim is cohesive and potent school-community partnerships. With proper policy support, a comprehensive approach can be woven into the fabric of every school, and neighboring schools can be linked to share limited resources and achieve economies of scale.

Figure 1. Interconnected systems for meeting the needs of all students

Aims:

To provide a CONTINUUM OF SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & SERVICES

To ensure use of the LEAST INTERVENTION NEEDED

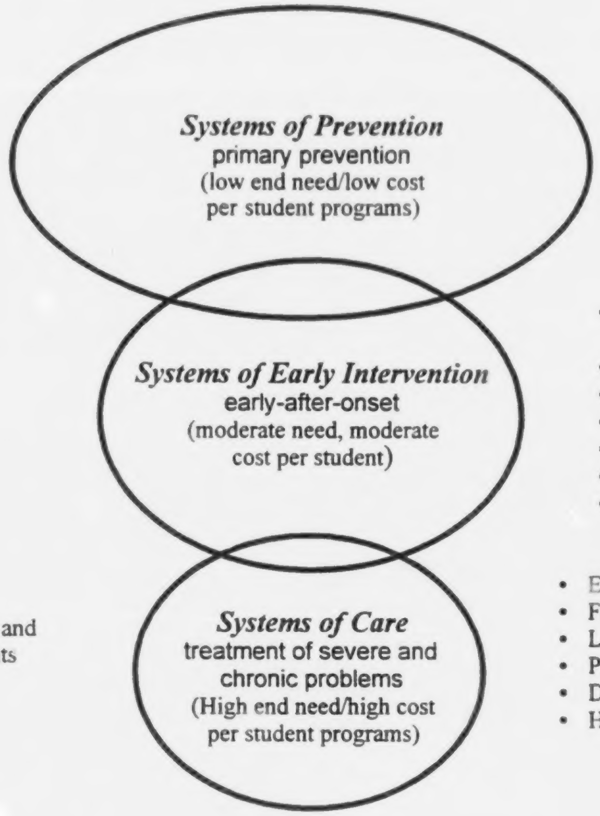
School Resources
(facilities, stakeholders,
programs, services)

Examples:

- General health education
- Drug and alcohol education
- Support for transitions
- Conflict resolution
- Parent involvement

- Pregnancy prevention
- Violence prevention
- Dropout prevention
- Learning/behavior accommodations
- Work programs

- Special education for learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, and other health impairments



Systems of Prevention
primary prevention
(low end need/low cost
per student programs)

Systems of Early Intervention
early-after-onset
(moderate need, moderate
cost per student)

Systems of Care
treatment of severe and
chronic problems
(High end need/high cost
per student programs)

Community Resources
(facilities, stakeholders,
programs, services)

Examples:

- Public health & safety programs
- Prenatal care
- Immunizations
- Recreation & enrichment
- Child abuse education

- Early identification to treat health problems
- Monitoring health problems
- Short-term counseling
- Foster placement/group homes
- Family support
- Shelter, food, clothing
- Job programs

- Emergency/crisis treatment
- Family preservation
- Long-term therapy
- Probation/incarceration
- Disabilities programs
- Hospitalization

Systemic collaboration* is essential to establish interprogram connections on a daily basis and over time to ensure seamless intervention within each system and among *systems* of *prevention, systems* of *early intervention*, and *systems of care*.

*Such collaboration involves horizontal and vertical restructuring of programs and services
(a) within jurisdictions, school districts, and community agencies (e.g., among departments, divisions, units, schools, clusters or schools)
(b) between jurisdictions, school and community agencies; public and private sectors; among schools; among community agencies;

moving from a 2 to a 3 component school reform model

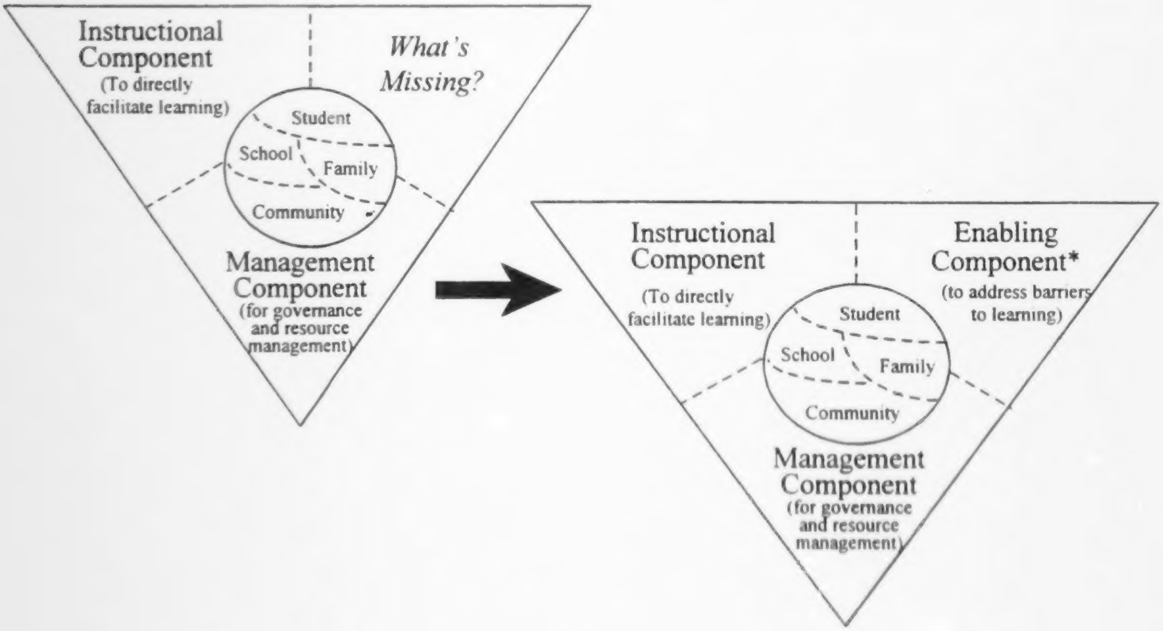
The above considerations have led to a call for reform advocates to expand their emphasis on improving instruction and school management to include a *comprehensive* component for addressing barriers to learning (see Figure 2). Moreover, the emphasis is on pursuing this third component with the same level of priority they devote to the other two. That is, the component should be a primary and essential facet of school reform. It is adoption of this third component that can make a commitment to *all* students more than a rhetorical statement.

Pioneer Initiatives to Reform Education Support Programs

Several reform initiatives already are exploring the power of moving from a two to a three component framework to ensure barriers to development and learning are addressed. Such an expanded approach is seen in exciting work underway in programs described in this report and the accompanying descriptive material. These models are developing blueprints for how schools and communities can collaborate in developing a comprehensive, multifaceted component to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development.

Such pioneering efforts offer new hope to students, parents, and teachers. They can play a major role for society by creating caring and supportive learning environments that maximize achievement and well-being for all youngsters. They can also help strengthen neighborhoods and communities. There can be little doubt that prevailing approaches to school reform are insufficient. The next step must be a complete restructuring of all education support programs and services -- including counseling, psychological, social services, special and compensatory education programs, safe and drug free school programs, student assistance programs, transition programs, some health education efforts, and more. To do any less is to maintain a very unsatisfactory status quo.

Figure 2. Moving from a two to a three component model for reform and restructuring.


Instructional Component
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- The third component (an enabling component) is established in policy and practice as primary and essential and is developed into a comprehensive approach by weaving together school and community resources.

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Key Features of Pioneer Initiatives to Reform Education Support Programs

Each of the Summit participants provided materials describing aspects of their work over the past few years. These resource materials along with information from related sources are compiled in an accompanying document to this report.

The following key features have been extrapolated from the available materials.

Three School Districts

1. Memphis City Schools

With 116,000 students, the Memphis City Schools are in the top 20 of large school districts in the country. The district has been immersed in school reform since 1992. Now that good progress has been made related to systemic instructional and management concerns, the district is expanding its agenda to encompass a third component to address factors interfering with students taking full advantage of academic reforms. This expansion is seen as essential given that the student population is characterized by high levels of poverty and family/community problems. The majority of students are described as experiencing a myriad of social, economic, health, and environmental factors that present barriers to learning. As a result, too many begin school lacking necessary home supports and the emotional, social, and cognitive developmental readiness to take advantage of instructional and curricular improvements. And, with each passing day, too many manifest increasing skill deficits and negative attitudes that worsen their plight.

In 1999, recognizing the need to expand school reform, the Memphis Superintendent directed Associate Superintendent Barbara Jones and her staff to develop a plan for revitalizing the district's Department of Student Programs and Services. The staff met with community representatives to "rethink and reframe how internal and external resources can be restructured to help school sites develop a comprehensive, multifaceted and integrated component for dealing with factors interfering with student achievement." From the process emerged a formal plan entitled *Adding Value, Enhancing Learning* and a vision *To create within each school a hub of multifaceted, integrated, comprehensive programs and services which enables teachers to teach and students to learn.* The reform encompasses a comprehensive restructuring at all levels so that every school site can evolve a student support system that effectively addresses barriers to learning.

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The Need for an Enabling Component in Memphis

The May 1999 draft of the Memphis plan indicates that the major systemic changes proposed are built on the premise that, for all children to succeed,

> *... reform efforts must include the following three components: instruction, management, and enabling. Establishment of the enabling component is key to the vision of improved opportunities for students to overcome barriers to learning....*

The plan goes on to state:

> *...The need to ensure the success of the district's mission, goals, and on-going reforms makes it imperative that we move expeditiously to start a process of developing such a component at every school. By moving from fragmented and supplementary "support services" to a comprehensive, multifaceted and integrated component for addressing barriers to learning, schools can enhance the impact of instructional reforms and increase student achievement.*
>
> Furthermore, for children to succeed:
>
> - Whole communities must take responsibility for supporting families. School success must become the goal of every social system -- not just of the schools.
> - Partnerships among schools, families, and community resources must support the efforts of teachers rather than create a new set of responsibilities and must also strengthen families and neighborhoods.
> - Better linkages must be made between schools and all community resources in ways that foster mutual respect, flexibility, family and community focus, and attention to relationships.

Memphis is establishing an enabling component beginning at the school level, moving up through the district, and outreaching to link with community resources. As outlined in the initial plan:

> *Implementation of an enabling component to address barriers to student growth and development requires building an infrastructure which will bring resources to the school to meet the needs identified by the school staff and the community. The new approach develops capacity at the school level with zone and district supports. Careful attention has been given to the role shift of central office from that of control to support. The new structures and strategies are designed to make the delivery of services to students and their families more efficient and cost effective.*

In essence, an enabling component becomes the third essential component of the district's school reform. This concept establishes a unifying core around which policy can be formulated to move from a fragmented, narrowly focused service delivery approach to a more comprehensive, integrated continuum of programs and services for students and their families. That is, to counteract factors interfering with student learning and performance, the concept calls for a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. This is a dramatic departure from traditional support services which tend to be narrowly focused, problem-specific and fragmented,. Using a school-based coordinating team and school-cluster (area) mechanisms, each school is developing better ways to address barriers to learning and mobilize interdisciplinary resources in a timely, responsive, and accountable manner. In addition to enhancing classroom efforts to support learning, the approach provides student and family assistance, responds to and prevents crises, facilitates transitions, increases home involvement in schooling, and seeks greater community involvement and support.

Following are some specific details drawn from an Executive Summary outlining the Memphis initiative. The overriding aim of the systemic changes is to expedite the goals of school reform -- with the focus being, first and foremost, on fostering academic achievement and success for **ALL** children. Operationally, the idea is to establish the leadership and infrastructure for an enabling component beginning with an interdisciplinary school-based team, followed by establishment of area level mechanisms for providing specialized resources to schools, and finally ensuring effective district and community linkages. These allow for (1) building capacity to identify, develop, and improve programs and access to resources and (2) increasing efficiency and accountability to better utilize internal and external resources to address barriers to student learning at the school level.

At the School Level

The initial focus is on establishing a School Coordinating Team in each school, composed of school staff and resource specialists. Such a resource team serves as the hub of learner support and is assigned authority to make the decisions necessary to address barriers to student learning. The team's major functions are to (a) identify barriers to learning and strategies to address them, (b) implement programs or services for prevention or intervention, (c) coordinate resources at the school level, (d) make student referrals based on assessments, and (e) develop a resource profile for the school. These functions are to be pursued in relation to five major areas of focus:

- *enhancing classroom supports*
- *health and human services*
- *family support and home involvement*
- *community outreach*
- *extended learning*

At the Area Level

To help ensure cohesive and equitable deployment of enabling resources, the plan calls for creating "families" of schools by dividing the district into nine areas. Based on geographical location and feeder school pattern, the learner support area also is designed to aid the identification of barriers to learning and the facilitation of resource mapping in each area. For families with youth attending more than one level of schooling in an area, this restructuring can increase efficiency and effectiveness and reduce duplication, redundancy, and overlap in resource use. Moreover, by creating an area database to reflect school, family and community, the district can promote systemic approaches to reducing barriers to learning at the community level and make program and service options attractive to community agencies.

Key mechanisms include an area *facilitator* and an area team. Each facilitator guides, coordinates, and ensures effective implementation of (a) the design model, (b) activity to identify existing and procure additional resources to support activity at schools throughout an area, and (c) personnel scheduling so schools receive regular and timely assistance. Area facilitators also serve as liaisons between areas and with the district level.

The Area *team* also plays a role in coordinating and ensuring needed resources are available to schools. Typical team members include representatives of disciplines (e.g., nurse, social worker, psychologist) and specialities (e.g., specialists in safe and drug free schools, attendance/ truancy, special education, community concerns, family advocacy, reform and program design).

At the District Level

Leadership at the district level ensures that enabling activity is coordinated and integrated systemwide. The department has been renamed the Department of Student Support. It encompasses six divisions:

- Division of Health and Social Support
- Division of Safe Schools and Alternative Programs
- Division of Family Support and Home Involvement
- Division of Extended Learning
- Division of Exceptional Children
- Optional Schools

The division heads constitute a district level team to support school and area level efforts. Among its functions are (a) coordination and integration of district level activities, (b) establishment of community links and collaboratives, (c) ensuring equitable distribution of resources, (d) guiding development of assessment/evaluation instruments, (e) reviewing accountability and quality performance indicators, and (f) addressing factors interfering with the enabling component's effectiveness.

Interagency Council

A community agency council is seen as another mechanism to guide partnerships among various agencies that address and serve youth. Such a council provides a context for the district superintendent, agency executives, and community representatives to align and respond to the needs of children, families, and neighborhoods.

Clearly, the Memphis School District's plan is creative and ambitious. It draws on other pioneering efforts and, at the same time, adapts the work of others to fit the specific needs of Memphis at this point in time.

2. *Detroit Public Schools*

As a large, impacted urban school district, the Detroit Public Schools are struggling to find better ways to meet the needs of the district's 173,557 students (of whom about 68% have free or reduced lunch status). The district has 282 schools and approximately 8,600 teachers. They have explored a variety of instructional reforms and over the last few years have begun to focus on comprehensive reforms related to addressing an array of barriers to student learning. In 1998, the district embraced the concept of a Resource Coordinating Team as a critical operational component for strengthening the framework for school effectiveness.

A Framework for Change

As stated in the Executive Summary of Detroit's *A Framework for Change: The Resource Coordinating Team (An Integrated Learner Support System)*:

"If school reforms are to ensure that **all** students succeed, such reforms must be designed to guarantee what the word **all** implies. **All** includes students who are motivationally ready for learning as well as those who are experiencing external and internal barriers that interfere with their ability to benefit from high standards and improved instruction. Failure to address the barriers to learning in a comprehensive way accounts for most learning, behavioral, health, and emotional problems seen in our schools today.

School reform initiatives have typically focused on managerial or governance constructs, instructional strategies, or community engagement efforts. While these areas are important to school transformation, they do not address the specific needs of students and those obstacles or barriers to their success. The missing link in educational reform is the establishment of a supportive, student-centered learning environment where professional school and community resources are identified and linked to address barriers to learning that confront urban students.

A shared belief that the school and the school system must be learner-centered requires a strong commitment to a rigorous institutional self-examination in order to provide students with the organizational structure, educational curriculum and the support mechanisms needed to become life long learners and contributing citizens. This belief must be firmly in place as the foundation for creating effective site-based managed, rejuvenated, restructured and empowered schools.

... [we] are seeking to build such site based managed schools that are caring learner-centered communities where all key stakeholders participate constructively in the major decisions that affect the school and the learners of that school. These constructivist learner environments must be based upon the sound foundation of effective research and experiential practice. . . . [Various] initiatives significantly influenced and guided our efforts, which materialized into an integrated learner support system.

This integrated organizational structure . . . consists of three components: a learning or instructional component, a governance management component, and an enabling component, [built around] the Resource Coordinating Team [RCT], which seeks to enhance and augment all school transformation efforts. . . ."

> *"The RCT is a critical operational component that strengthens the framework for school effectiveness. Its mission is to enhance academic achievement by promoting a healthy school environment that addresses the social, physical, cognitive, and emotional development of all children and youth."*

Resource Coordinating Team (RCT)

As adapted in Detroit, the RCT "is a school-based coordinated home/school/ community resource collaborative whose purpose is to understand the problems or barriers to learning and to correct or prevent their manifestations. ... [It focuses on]

1. identifying, coordinating and integrating the internal and external services and programs that address the underlying barriers to the teaching and learning process and to facilitate their understanding, prevention and correction
2. structuring individual and school-based intervention plans that respond to the needs of staff, students and their families
3. securing the proactive involvement of parents and community and providing timely responses to student needs,
4. creating opportunities for open dialogue and discussion regarding school concerns, issues and development"

Team Composition

An RCT "includes representatives of all staff members who have a defined responsibility to lead or support a school's instructional efforts. Participants ... generally ... are administrators, school social workers, school psychologists, guidance counselors, nurses and/or other health related specialists, attendance officers, teacher consultants, teachers of the speech and language impaired, regular and special education teachers, curriculum specialists, bilingual specialists and community agency representatives. This list is not all inclusive and may be augmented by other service providers as the need warrants. . . ."

* * * * *

". . . The approaches to the RCT seek to establish systemic change by building relationships within schools, among schools and between schools and communities. This collaborative mechanism for the coordination and integration of resources can influence institutional change so that policies and practices become and remain learner-centered."

Results-Oriented

"The RCT is a results driven concept and process with success of the initiative based upon improvement in the following areas:

- student outcomes -- attendance, achievement, reduced violence;
- staff, performance -- increased collaboration and integration of learner-centered resources and strategies;
- school development -- aligning and developing systematic practices and policies that address learning needs of all learners;
- parent /home/ community engagement -- reciprocal sharing of resources such as extended educational experiences for parents, partnerships and parent centers.

Scope, Focus, and Programmatic Areas Adopted in Detroit

"The scope and focus of the Resource Coordinating Team* is inclusive and broad based as it addresses the following programmatic areas supporting the school development process:

student and family assistance ... extends beyond the traditional support services by expanding the supportive family network, resolving possible explosive situations before they erupt and by providing consultation services to families and students from within the system or through community agencies and organizations.

support for transitions ... provided by assisting the learner in making adjustments such as the promotion to ninth grade; move to or from special education; school-to-school and grade-to-grade transfers; prevention and intervention programs; and achievement and recognition programs.

community outreach . . . initiated to embrace community and service organizations, public and private agencies, business and professional organizations, the faith community, colleges and universities, professional foundations, and individual school volunteers in addressing school needs and concerns. Among the agencies working with the teams to address students' needs are Wayne County's Family Independence Agency (the County's social services agency), Department of Community Justice, Human Services Coordinating Body, Children's Center, and Third Judicial Circuit Court. Also involved are the City of Detroit's Office of Children's Ombudsman, Police Department, and Health Department; Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan; the Detroit Federation of Teachers; and the Organization of School Administrators and Supervisors.

home involvement . . . embraces the parent as a learner and addresses parent or caregiver learning needs, i.e., obtaining a GED, participation in English classes as a second language, mutual support groups, parenting classes and helping parents become effective at home teachers.

crisis prevention and intervention . . . facilitates immediate emergency care when there is a crisis as well as the appropriate follow-up care provided to a student, groups of students, families and community members as necessary.

classroom focused enabling . . . personalize the teaching learning process and build professional relationships that enhance teacher effectiveness in working with a range of learner abilities, instructional strategies and needs."

*Adapted from Addressing Barriers to Student Learning: Closing Gaps in School/Community Policy and Practice (1997) by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor School Mental Health Project, UCLA Department of Psychology.

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3. Los Angeles Unified School District

Next to New York City, the LAUSD has the second largest student population in the country. The total K-12 enrollment in the fall of 1999 was 711,187. More than 200,000 other students attend community adult schools, occupational centers and children's centers. To serve those students, there are more than 41,000 certificated employees at all levels, most of them teachers but also including counselors, librarians, nurses, school psychologists and school and central administrators. The school district serves an area of 704 square miles, encompassing a population of more than 4.6 million who live not only in Los Angeles City, but in the cities of Cudahy, Gardena, Huntington Park, Lomita, Maywood, San Fernando, Vernon and West Hollywood. Within the district boundaries, there are also portions of 20 other cities, as well as unincorporated Los Angeles County areas. In all, LAUSD has 931 schools and centers (424 elementary schools, 72 middle schools, 49 senior high schools, five multi-level schools, 17 opportunity schools and centers, 45 continuation high schools, 19 special education schools, 150 magnet schools and centers, 28 community adult schools, 102 children's centers, eight primary centers, two newcomer schools and 10 employment preparation centers). As of July 2000, the district will be decentralized with the creation of 11 largely autonomous sub-districts.

Integrated Learning Support to Address Barriers to Learning

The Los Angeles Unified School District is committed to reducing barriers that prevent students from learning and achieving in school. Over the years, widespread concern throughout the district regarding high dropout rates and low test scores has generated constant pressure for reform. In the mid 1990s, the Division of Student Health and Human Services took the lead in developing a plan for improving "learning supports." The work was informed by two major projects in which the District was involved: (a) a federally funded program focused on systemic changes at school sites necessary for addressing barriers to student learning effectively and (b) a "break the mold" model being developed as part of the national initiative funded by the New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC).

The stated goals in the *Strategic Plan for Restructuring of Student Health and Human Services* were:

- to increase the organization, effectiveness, and efficiency of the District to provide learning supports to students and their families
- to increase partnerships with parents, schools, community-based organizations, city, and county efforts that support improved health and education outcomes for youth.

To these ends, the Division of Health and Human Services adopted the following mission statement:

> "The District will increase student achievement by reducing barriers to learning through integrated LEARNING SUPPORT including:
>
> - the provision of direct services in collaboration with colleagues, parents, teachers, and administrators in the systematic development of learning support programs with strategic focus on early intervention
> - collaboration and linkage with other community and professional providers who serve the same students and families."

Organization Facilitators (Systemic Change Agents)

To facilitate the process of restructuring, the strategic plan called for developing a cadre of change agents called Organization Facilitators. Initially, these change agent positions were supported through a combination of general funds and some special project resources. Because the role fit criteria established in Title XI of the Improving Americas Schools Act, the district subsequently used this avenue to fund enough Organization Facilitator to cover all 27 of its school clusters.*

Organization Facilitators assist schools and high school complexes to better coordinate resources and services. Working with *Resource Coordinating Councils* and school-site *Resource Coordinating Teams*, the intent is for Organization Facilitators to help all stakeholders to identify and clarify the needs of greatest priority for their students and families within the high school complex. The Organization Facilitators also connect with health and human service providers from the District and the community to develop action steps and new service delivery patterns which better respond to the needs of students and families. The emphasis is on organizing and coordinating existing programs and resources into learning supports that improve student attendance, student participation in school, and student achievement.

*In March of 1996, the Board of Education received federal approval for a waiver (Title XI, section (b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) to permit the District to use funds to implement learning support programs as laid out in the Strategic Plan for the Restructuring of Student Health and Human Services. Title XI is designed to foster coordinated services to address problems that children face outside the classroom that affect their performance in schools. Under this provision, school districts, schools, and consortia of schools may use up to 5 percent of the funds they receive under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to develop, implement, or expand efforts to coordinate services. The intent is to improve access to social, health, and education programs and services to enable children to achieve in school and to involve parents more fully in their children's education. Among the barriers cited in the legislation as impeding learning are poor nutrition, unsafe living conditions, physical and sexual abuse, family and gang violence, inadequate health care, lack of child care, unemployment, and substance abuse. It should also be noted that, in addition to redeploying federal support through Title XI to underwrite the work of the Organization Facilitators, federal project money was used to pilot test major facets of the systemic changes. State and county initiatives related to mental health, public and private community-school collaborations, regionalization of service areas, and cross-training also have been incorporated into the restructuring effort.

To ensure Learning Support was a regular focus of the Board of Education, a new board committee was established to focus specifically on Student Health and Human Services. (After two years of operation, a variety of political considerations led to committee's demise.)

Learning Support and the Board of Education

In 1998, the Board passed a policy resolution endorsing the concept of LEARNING SUPPORT to "break down the barriers to student achievement." The resolution stated that: "a component to address barriers to student learning and enhance healthy development [should] be fully integrated with efforts to improve the instructional and management/governance components and be pursued as a primary and essential component of the District's educational reforms in classrooms, schools, complexes/clusters, and the central office level."

Among the specifics stressed in the proposal were the importance of:

- adopting the seven area framework being used by the Division of Health and Human Services to guide coordination and integration of existing programs and activities. The seven areas are: Classroom Learning Support, Learning Environment and School Culture, Support for Student Transitions and Mobility, Parent Involvement, School and Community Safety (prevention and crisis intervention), Health and Social Services, and Community and Volunteer Assistance;
- countering fragmentation by restructuring the central office administrative organization to place all programs and activities related to Learning Support including Special Education under the leadership of one administrator;
- incorporating a substantial focus on the Learning Support Component into all stakeholder development activity;
- encouraging all clusters and schools to support development of Cluster/Complex Resource Coordinating Councils and School-Site Resource Coordinating Teams because such teams provide key mechanisms for enhancing the Learning Support component by ensuring resources are mapped and analyzed and strategies are developed for the most effective use of school, complex, and District-wide resources and for appropriate school-community collaborations.

A Work in Progress

It should be emphasized that all the work was a centrally-developed plan. As such, it had no guarantees of adoption/adaptation by individual schools and complexes of schools. Where Resource Coordinating Councils (for complexes of schools) and Resource Coordinating Teams (at specific school sites) have been successfully established, the tasks of mapping, analyzing, and redeploying resources are underway. Development of comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated programmatic approaches for school sites is seen as a next phase of reform.

For restructuring to be successful throughout the newly created 11 sub-districts, the next steps require extensive restructuring of school sites and related changes among school complexes to help them develop a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated component to address barriers to learning. This probably will require additional policy action by the Board of Education and greater integration with instructional and management reforms in each sub-district. It also will require the effective use of Organization Facilitators to help develop infrastructure for the reforms at each school site -- including identification of leads for this component at each school site and leadership training for them.

Hawai'i: A State-wide School System with a Comprehensive Approach

Hawai'i is the only state where all the schools are part of a state-wide system led by the state's Department of Education. There are about 185,000 students, 11, 400 teachers, 667 school level administrative positions (492 principals and vice-principals), and 251 public schools housed in seven districts. Over 40% of the students receive school lunch subsidies, about 7% have limited English proficiency. The percentage needing special education has been increasing dramatically and currently is about 8%. In all, the state estimates that over 40% bring with them to school some type of educational disadvantage. The average student misses about 12 days of school per year. Over the last few years, a plan has been developed to establish a *School-Based Comprehensive Student Support System* for schools across the state. The effort has taken on an urgency because of a court order (i.e., the Felix Cayetano Consent Decree) that mandates improved school-based approaches in meeting mental health and special education needs. The need is to provide student and family support within the school as an integral part of the school's ongoing improvement efforts.

Comprehensive Student Support System (CSSS)

In Hawai'i, the Comprehensive Student Support System (CSSS) is the Department of Education's umbrella for ensuring a continuum of programs and services that support a school's academic, social, emotional and physical environments so that all students learn and attain the state's content and performance standards. CSSS is built on the premise that:

> *When school-based supports are provided in a timely and effective manner, fewer students will require more complex or intense services.*

The intent is to respond to the changing needs of every student by helping to meet these needs and promote success. That is, CSSS aims to provide students, families, teachers, principals, and staff with the support they need to ensure that students succeed. The focus begins in the classroom, with differentiated classroom practices as the base of support for each student. It extends beyond the classroom to include school and community resources and programs. An array of student support services focuses on prevention and early intervention to ensure that the supports provided and the delivery process correspond to the severity, complexity, and frequency of each student's needs.

CSSS links students and families to the resources of the Department of Education (DOE), as well as those of their neighborhood, their community, the Department of Health (DOH) and other governmental and private agencies and groups. The aim is to align programs and services in an individually responsive manner to create a caring community. In its design, this caring community is to minimize duplication and fragmentation of services and ensure that services are timely and effective, and it is to embrace the principles of the Hawai'i Child and Adolescent System Service Program.

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A Three Component Policy

CSSS incorporates a policy that stresses three necessary interrelated components within the schools:

- *instruction*
- *management*
- *student support.*

The student support component is viewed as an array of programs and services that seeks to displace various risk factors to remove barriers to learning and enable or facilitate learning. The instructional component underscores literacy advancement through hands-on and contextual learning that acknowledges diversity. The management component includes functions that organize the instructional and student support components. These include planning, budgeting, staffing, directing, coordinating, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting functions.

CSSS Goals

As its major goals, CSSS seeks to:

- Provide students with comprehensive, coordinated, integrated, and customized supports that are accessible, timely, and strength-based so that they can achieve in school;
- Involve families, fellow students, educators, and community members as integral partners in the provision of a supportive, respectful learning environment;
- Integrate the human and financial resources of appropriate public and private agencies to create caring communities at each of our schools.

At All Schools

The plan is to develop CSSS throughout the state in ways that fully integrate with the instructional and management components at school sites. That is, at all schools, CSSS will provide a set of comprehensive programs and services that promote and facilitate healthy development and positive social growth and address barriers to learning and thus enhance academic achievement. The approach encourages an efficient way to systematize what is working and to identify and improve what is not working.

Program Areas of CSSS

Student support programs and services displace barriers that impede student success and offer a seamless continuum of services to all students and families. The critical elements of student support are:

- *Personalized Classroom Climate and Differentiated Classroom Practices*
- *Prevention/Early Intervention*
- *Family Involvement*
- *Support for Transition*
- *Community Outreach and Support*
- *Specialized Assistance and Crisis/Emergency Support & Follow-Through*

The above range of proactive support requires teaming, organization, and accountability that incorporates high expectations for all students.

The extent to which these elements are included in the school's delivery of student supports is assessed on an ongoing basis. These descriptors are used to develop the schools' Standards Implementation Design (SID). Characteristics of the SID include criteria such as standards-based, data-driven results, which are oriented to and focused on learning.

Levels of Student Support

The Comprehensive Student Support System provides five levels of student support. Each level increases in intensity or specialization of service. The five levels of student support services are:

Level 1: *Basic Support for All Students*

Level 2: *Informal Additional Support through Collaboration*

Level 3: *Services through School-Level and Community Programs*

Level 4: *Specialized Services from DOE and/or Other Agencies*

Level 5: *Intensive and Multiple Agency Services*

Anyone may request assistance for the student. Each request is submitted to a core committee. The committee determines whether services should be coordinated by the committee or by a student support team (SST). The decision is based/focused on the student's level of need. If the need is at Level 1 and/or 2, the core committee is responsible for coordinating services. If the need is at Level 3, 4, or 5, an SST is convened. The family is included in the SST process, and all other participants come prepared to share their knowledge about the student.

Implementation

CSSS was initiated in Spring 1997 with a focus on identification, access, and provision of appropriate mental health services to students with special needs. The State Legislature has provided financial support to promote this initiative. A chronology of implementation follows:

1997-98: CSSS implemented at 38 schools I seven school complexes, including the entire district (island) of Kauai.

1998-99: CSSS added three more complexes, for a total of 62 schools, creating 10 *CSSS Learning Sites*, one complex per district throughout the state.

1999-00: Per *Hawaii Department of Education's Strategic Plan for Standards-based Reform*, 252 schools and 36 complexes implemented CSSS.

Washington State: Seeking New Directions

Washington State has 296 operating school districts enrolling 1,002,044 students. There are 317 high schools, 331 junior/middle schools, 1,129 elementary schools, 24 complete schools, 216 alternative schools, and 99 unclassified schools. 25% of the students are racial/ethnic minorities. The districts are designated as first- or second-class. There are 104 first-class districts enrolling 878,111 students (87.6% of the total). These range in size from 47,989 students (Seattle) to 2,093 (Elma). About 1/2 million are enrolled in the 29 largest districts which have over 10,000 students each. There are 93,287 teachers, administrators, and other "key" staff. The budget is $4.8 billion per year (47% of the State General Fund).

In 1992, Washington State began pursuing its current education reform process which was designed by a Governor's Commission and approved by the legislature. The preamble to the education reform legislation states:

> *The goal of the Basic Education Act for the schools of the state of Washington set forth in this chapter shall be to provide students with the opportunity to become responsible citizens, to contribute to their own economic well-being and to that of their families and communities, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives.*

Supportive Learning Environment

State Superintendent Terry Bergeson has been the key leader of Washington's education reform process and views a high quality and supportive learning environment as an essential component of education reform. Her Office has adopted the concept of a *supportive learning environment* as a focal point for its efforts to enhance and integrate school and community collaborations for student and family support. Stated as a strategic goal, the intent is to *facilitate the development of the safe, nurturing, healthy, and civil learning environment that is essential for each student's learning.*

From this perspective, education reform must create learning environments that are safe, nurturing, healthy, civil, and intellectually stimulating "so students can engage in learning and will be committed to acquiring the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors to succeed in the 21st century." Creating such an environment involves weaving together the resources of students, families, communities, and school staff.

Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Support, Tom Kelly, is leading the way in promoting development of a commitment to supportive learning environments at schools throughout the state. One section of the Operation and Support division focuses on *Safe and Drug Free Schools.* Another is called the section for *Education Support* which "promotes students' academic success by linking community resources to schools and by administering programs which offer a broad variety of learning options appropriate to student and family needs." This section coordinates programs and services to support student success in 12 areas: Alternative Education, Early Childhood, Education Centers, Even Start Family Literacy, Health Services, Home-Based Education, Homeless Education, Institutional Education, Partnerships for Learning, Private Education, Readiness to Learn, and Truancy.

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A Data-Based Approach to Developing Supportive Learning Environments

In the year 2000, the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction implemented a two-year process to further its design for a supportive learning environment. To kickoff the process, key administrators from the state Office hosted an interchange with a group of researchers and also conducted a literature search focused on arriving at a best practices synthesis about what constitutes a supportive learning environment.

At the same time, steps are being taken to develop a learning environment assessment and evaluation tool that includes physical, social, emotional and intellectual factors on a continuum and that is integrated with school district or local school plans for student improvement. (IBM is assisting in developing prototypes.) Three to five prototypes will be reviewed by teachers, administrators and community members during four regional summer institutes. The prototypes will use available data from counties, communities, and schools that are indicators of supportive learning environments.

The next steps include having local schools pilot the assessment tool (based on prototype feedback). Eventually, the plan is for the framework to become the basis for targeting resource allocations toward verified learning environment factors (physical, social, emotional and intellectual) that are significantly correlated with student academic progress. Through 2000-2001, the pilot assessment data will be used in selected schools and resources to enhance supportive learning environments will be allocated through existing community, school and family collaborative programs.

California: Struggling to Bring it All Together

California has 8,568 schools enrolling 5,951,612 students. In terms of race/ethnicity, 42% of the students are Latino/Hispanic; 37% are White, Nonhispanic; 8.6% are African American, Nonhispanic, 8% are Asian; 2.4% Filipino; .9% American Indian or Alaska Native; .6% Pacific Islander. There are over 1,000 public education agencies in the state (e.g., regular school districts, regional service agencies, state-operated agencies). There are about 8,000 public elementary and secondary schools employing about 285,000 teachers, about 20,000 administrators, and about 21,000 pupil services staff. The State's Department of Education has a strong emphasis on promoting healthy development and addressing barriers to learning to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to benefit from schooling. As currently structured, the two branches most concerned with these matters are: (1) the Child, Youth and Family Services Branch and (2) the Education Equity, Access and Support Branch. The Child, Youth and Family Services Branch encompasses three divisions: (a) Learning Support and Partnerships, (b) Child Development, and (c) Nutrition Services. The Education Equity, Access, and Support Branch encompasses three divisions: (a) Education Support Systems, (b) Special Education, and (c) State Special Schools and Services.

A look at the Learning Support and Partnerships Division and the Education Support Systems Division highlights the range of enabling activity with which the Department is concerned, some of its efforts to restructure such activity, and the need to further integrate programs. The Learning Support and Partnerships Division consists of Healthy Start (e.g., an initiative focused on school-linked services), After School Partnerships, School Health Connections (the state has a CDC infrastructure grant), Family and Community Partnerships, and the Healthy Kids Program. The Education Support Systems Division encompasses Student Support Services and Programs, Safe Schools and Violence Prevention, Adult Education, and Educational Options.

Learning Support

The State's Program Quality Review guidance document conveys the concern for providing students with ***Learning Support.***

> "There is a growing consensus among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners that stronger collaborative efforts by families, schools, and communities are essential to students' success. Schools need to depend on families to see that children come to school every day ready to learn; families and the community depend on schools to take the primary role in ensuring that students achieve high educational standards and provide a safe and healthy school environment; families and schools depend on community partners to provide opportunities and accessible supports and services to meet students' basic needs and to foster their growth and development. Tragically, an increasing number of American children live in communities where caring relationships, support resources, and a profamily system of education and human services do not exist to protect children and prepare them to be healthy, successful, resilient learners. Especially in these communities, a renewed partnership of schools, families, and community members must be created to design and carry out system improvements to provide the learning support required by each student in order to succeed.

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> **Learning support** is the collection of resources (school, home, community), strategies and practices, and environmental and cultural factors extending beyond the regular classroom curriculum that together provide the physical, emotional, and intellectual support that every child and youth needs to achieve high quality learning. A school that has an exemplary learning support system employs all the internal and external supports and services needed to help students to become good parents, good neighbors, good workers, and good citizens of the world. The overriding philosophy is that educational success, physical health, emotional support, and family and community strength are inseparable. Because learning support is an integral part of the educational program, the Program Quality Review teams (including students, parents, school staff, and community members) need to assess learning support provided to students and are encouraged to include specific learning support objectives in the improvement plan."

Learning Environment

In this context, considerable emphasis is placed on the climate of the school (e.g., the learning environment and school culture).

> "A positive learning environment and a safe, supportive school culture are foundation blocks for the healthful growth and development of children and youths. Some elements of the learning environment and school culture that have a considerable impact on student success include the expectations for learning and development; issues of diversity; transitions between grades, schools and programs; safety; and health."

Partnerships

Another facet given emphasis is the importance of partnerships. Among the types of partnerships seen as necessary to learning support are: (a) school staff collaboration, (b) family-school partnerships, and (c) school-community partnerships.

> "Throughout any community, there is a range of individuals who can and should contribute to helping students succeed at school. It is one thing for a school to advocate partnerships; it is another thing to create conditions that allow for effective participation. Thus, a key facet in fostering effective partnerships is to establish opportunities and procedures specifically to welcome and engage partners in the educational program. Another essential facet is to provide stakeholder development programs for school staff, families, and community members so that they have the skills to participate meaningfully in and promote collaborative partnerships.
>
> School partners include school staff, students, parents and families, child and family-serving agencies, neighborhood and volunteer service organizations, businesses, colleges and universities, and other participants whose involvement is important to student's healthful growth, development, and academic results. The partnership is formed when these individuals, involved in a collaborative, ongoing, and equal working relationship, assume joint responsibility for meeting the needs of the 'whole child' and improving student results. They receive and provide training on education and learning support issue and clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in the education sphere. They are typically the most qualified spokespersons to maintain communication and advocacy linkages with other members of the school community. At both the formal and the informal levels, these partners come together to interact and share their common purpose of providing the best education for all students."

Personalized Assistance

With specific respect to instruction, learning supports are seen as requiring *Personalized Assistance*. Major categories include: (a) personalized assistance for groups with special needs, (b) personalized assistance for individuals with low-intensity or short-term needs, and (c) personalized assistance for individuals with high-intensity, long-term needs.

> "Schools need to be prepared to support students as individuals with varying educational, cultural, physical, and emotional needs and to provide assistance or facilitate the delivery of an array of services to help students achieve high educational levels. It is important that faculty, guidance staff, support staff, and parents share responsibility and are proactive in identifying and responding to students who are insufficiently challenged or who are having difficulties in school. When teachers, school support staff, and families learn to intervene early, there is less need later for costly and intrusive services.
>
> Teachers, students, and parents should have access to specialized teachers, counselors, school psychologists, and other experts to participate in improving-the educational program and in removing barriers to learning. Often these personnel make up a study team that works with students and their families to develop and monitor a plan for assistance from a variety of school staff and family members., When appropriate, community service providers, such as probation officers, public- health nurses, youth service center staff, or staff at: suicide prevention centers, may need to work with the school in Assisting a student.
>
> Although a firm foundation of a positive learning environment, school culture, and productive partnerships decreases the need for Personalized assistance, almost every student and family needs additional assistance at some time during the student's school career to maximize the student's opportunity to be a successful learner. Some forms of assistance are extensions of school-based activities and practices, such as literacy enrichment sessions. Sometimes formal interventions involving juvenile justice are required. The need for personalized assistance may be indicated on the discovery that a student or group of students need a more accelerated curriculum or an opportunity to pursue an artistic talent. On the other hand, personalized assistance may be necessary to elevate the academic results for a particular student group or to sustain an individual whose family is in crisis. The key to providing successful personalized assistance is to act early; the measure of effectiveness is improved student results."

In describing *the improvement process for Learning Support*, the document stresses:

- involving the whole school
- involving the whole community
- using data
- drawing on a variety of resources.

A New American Schools Comprehensive School Reform Model: The Urban Learning Center

This evolving school reform model was initiated as part of a venture supported by the New American Schools Development Corporation. The resulting "break-the-mold" comprehensive school reform design was first implemented in Los Angeles and is designated in federal legislation as one of the outstanding designs for comprehensive school reform that schools are encouraged to adopt. It is currently being replicated in several localities.

It is the only comprehensive school reform model to incorporate a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach to addressing barriers to learning.

An Enabling Component called Learning Supports

This pioneering model clearly moves school reform from an insufficient two component approach to one that encompasses a third essential component. That is, the design not only delineates reforms for curriculum/instruction and governance/management, it *addresses barriers to learning* by establishing a comprehensive, integrated continuum of *learning supports*. As it evolves, the Learning Supports (or "enabling") Component is providing local, state, and national policy makers with a detailed framework and concrete practices for enabling students to learn and teachers to teach. Key to achieving these educational imperatives is an ongoing process by which school and community resources for addressing barriers to learning and development are restructured and woven together.

By calling for reforms that fully integrate a focus on addressing barriers, the Learning Supports (or enabling) Component provides a unifying framework for responding to a wide range of psychosocial factors interfering with young people's learning and performance. Besides focusing on barriers and deficits, there is a strong emphasis on facilitating healthy development, positive behavior, and asset-building as the best way to prevent problems and as an essential adjunct to corrective interventions. In defining the component as one that both addresses barriers to learning and promotes healthy development, the framework encompasses the type of models described as full-service schools -- and goes beyond them by creating a much more *comprehensive* approach.

Emergence of a comprehensive and cohesive component to enable learning by addressing barriers requires policy reform and operational restructuring. Key aspects of this are:

- weaving together what is available at a school
- expanding this through integrating school, community, and home resources
- enhancing access to community resources by linking as many as feasible to school programs.

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Ultimately, all this calls for major systemic changes. In particular, it requires restructuring of school-owned enabling activity, such as pupil services and special and compensatory education programs. In the process, mechanisms must be developed to coordinate and eventually integrate school-owned enabling activity and school and community-owned resources. Restructuring also must ensure the component is well integrated with the instructional/developmental and management components. This minimizes marginalization and fragmentation, and ensures programs to address problems play out both at the classroom level and school-wide.

Six Areas of Enabling Activity

Operationalizing such a component requires a framework delineating *basic areas of enabling activity*. It also involves creating an *infrastructure* to ensure such activity continues to develop and evolve throughout a school.

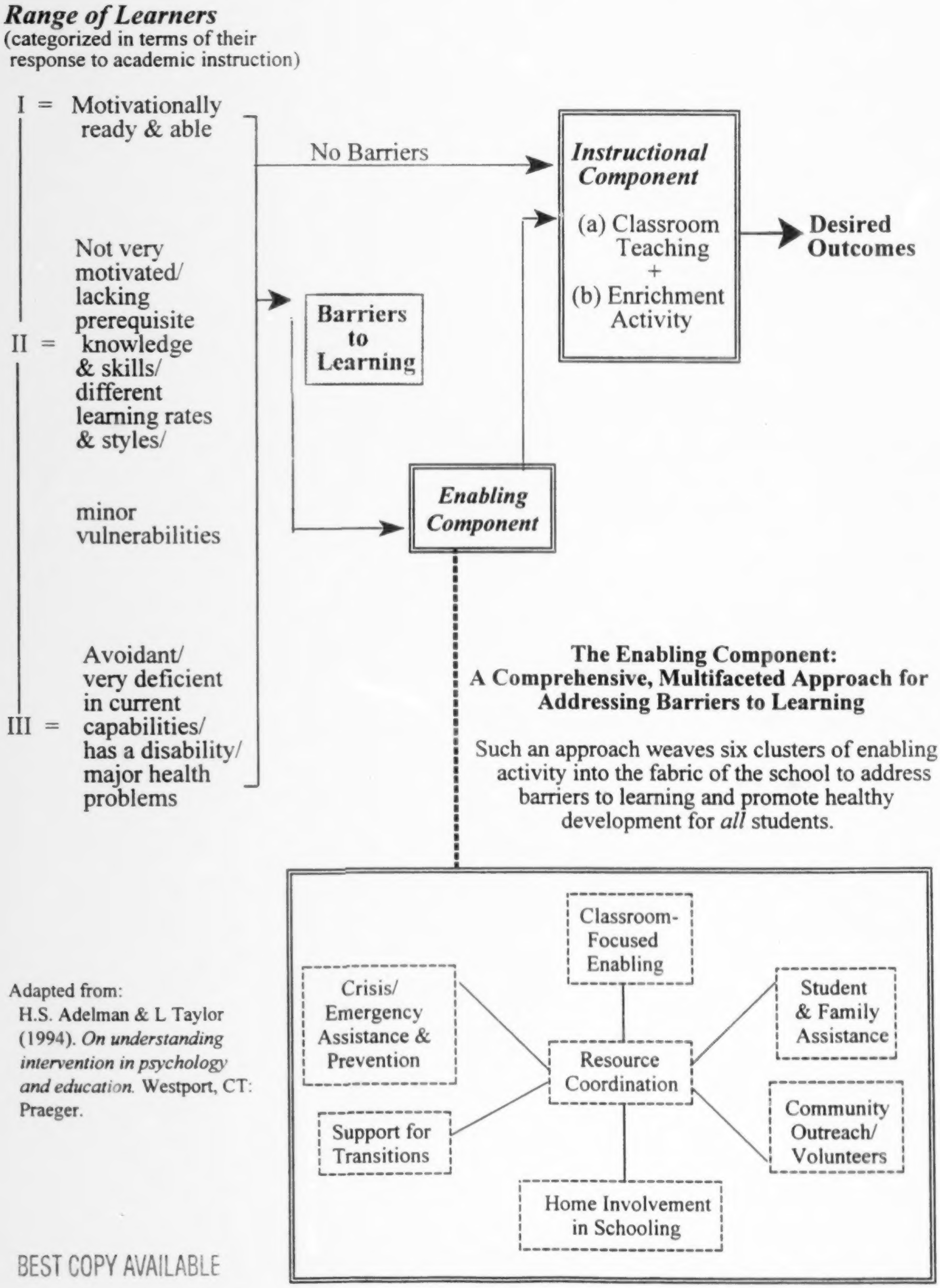
As spelled out in the model, there are six basic interrelated areas of enabling activity. As can be seen in Figure 3 and the accompanying Exhibit, these are: *Classroom-focused enabling* -- stressing classroom reforms that help teachers enhance the way they assist students with "garden variety" learning, behavior, and emotional problems (including ways to enhance motivation, use prereferral interventions and special accommodations, etc.). *Support for transitions* -- encompassing such activity as welcoming and social support for new students and families, articulation, and before and after school programs. *Student and family assistance* -- which provides health and human services offered in the context of a family resource center and a school-based clinic. The remaining areas encompass *crisis response and prevention, home involvement in schooling, community outreach* (including an extensive focus on using volunteers).

Resource Coordinating Team

With respect to *infrastructure*, a key mechanism is a resource-oriented team which in this model is called a Resource Coordinating Team. Such a resource-oriented team differs from those created to review students (such as a student support, study, or success team, a teacher assistance team, a case management team). That is, its focus is not on specific cases, but on clarifying resources and their best use. Such a school-based team provides what often is a missing mechanism for managing and enhancing *systems* to coordinate, integrate, and strengthen interventions. For example, the team can: (a) identify and analyze activity and resources to improve the school's efforts to prevent and ameliorate problems, (b) ensure there are effective systems for prereferral interventions, referral, case management, and quality assurance, (c) guarantee appropriate procedures for effective management of programs and for communication among school staff and with the home, and (d) explore ways to redeploy and enhance resources -- such as clarifying which activities are nonproductive and suggesting better uses for the resources, as well as reaching out to connect with additional resources in the school district and community.

Creation of resource-oriented teams provides essential mechanisms for starting to weave together existing school and community resources and encourage services and programs to function in an increasingly cohesive way. Such teams also are vehicles for building working relationships and can play a role in solving turf and operational problems, developing plans to ensure availability of a coordinated set of efforts, and generally improving the attention paid to developing a comprehensive, integrated approach for addressing barriers to student learning.

Figure 3. An enabling component to address barriers to learning and enhance healthy development at a school site.


Range of Learners
(categorized in terms of their response to academic instruction)
I = Motivationally ready & able
II = Not very motivated/ lacking prerequisite knowledge & skills/ different learning rates & styles/ minor vulnerabilities
III = Avoidant/ very deficient in current capabilities/ has a disability/ major health problems
No Barriers
Barriers to Learning
Instructional Component
(a) Classroom Teaching + (b) Enrichment Activity
Desired Outcomes
Enabling Component
Classroom-Focused Enabling
Crisis/ Emergency Assistance & Prevention
Student & Family Assistance
Resource Coordination
Support for Transitions
Community Outreach/ Volunteers
Home Involvement in Schooling

The Enabling Component: A Comprehensive, Multifaceted Approach for Addressing Barriers to Learning

Such an approach weaves six clusters of enabling activity into the fabric of the school to address barriers to learning and promote healthy development for *all* students.

Adapted from:
H.S. Adelman & L Taylor (1994). *On understanding intervention in psychology and education.* Westport, CT: Praeger.

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Exhibit

Six Interrelated Clusters of Enabling Activity*

I. *Classroom Focused Enabling*

When a teacher has difficulty working with a youngster, the first step is to address the problem within the regular classroom and perhaps with added home involvement. The emphasis is on enhancing classroom-based efforts that enable learning by increasing teacher effectiveness for preventing and handling problems. Personalized help is provided to increase a teacher's array of strategies for working with a wider range of individual differences. For example, teachers learn to use volunteers and peer tutoring to enhance social and academic support and to increase their range of accommodative strategies and their ability to teach students compensatory strategies. As appropriate, support *in the classroom* is provided by resource and itinerant teachers and counselors. Work in this area requires (a) programs for personalized professional development, (b) systems to expand resources, (c) programs for temporary out of class help, and (4) programs to develop aides, volunteers, and any others who help in classrooms or who work with teachers to enable learning. Through classroom-focused enabling programs, teachers are better prepared to address similar problems when they arise in the future. (The classroom curriculum already should encompass a focus on fostering socio-emotional and physical development; such a focus is seen as an essential element in preventing learning, behavior, emotional, and health problems.) Besides enabling learning, two aims of all this work are to increase mainstreaming efficacy and reduce the need for special services.

II. *Student and Family Assistance*

Student and family assistance should be reserved for the relatively few problems that cannot be handled without adding special interventions (e.g., health and social services, special education). The emphasis is on providing special services in a personalized way to assist with a broad-range of needs. To begin with, available social, physical and mental health, and remedial programs in the school and community are used. As community outreach brings in other resources, they are linked to existing activity in an integrated manner. Special attention is paid to enhancing systems for triage, case and resource management, direct services to meet immediate needs, and referral for special services and special education resources and placements as appropriate. Ongoing efforts are made to expand and enhance resources. Work in this area requires (a) programs designed to support classroom focused enabling -- with specific emphasis on reducing the need for teachers to seek special programs and services, (b) a stakeholder information program to clarify available assistance and how to access help, (c) systems to facilitate requests for assistance and strategies to evaluate the requests (including use of strategies designed to reduce the need for special intervention), (d) a programmatic approach for handling referrals, (e) programs providing direct service, (f) programmatic approaches for effective case and resource management, and (g) interface with community outreach to assimilate additional resources into current service delivery. As major outcomes, the intent is to ensure special assistance is provided when necessary and appropriate and that such assistance is effective.

III. *Crisis Assistance and Prevention*

Schools must respond to, minimize the impact of, and prevent crises. This requires (a) systems and programs for emergency/crisis response at a site, throughout a school complex, and community-wide (including a program to ensure follow-up care) and (b) prevention programs for school and community to address school safety and violence reduction, suicide prevention, child abuse prevention and so forth. Desired outcomes of crisis assistance include ensuring immediate emergency and follow-up care is provided so students are able to resume learning without undue delay. Prevention activity outcomes are reflected in indices showing there is a safe and productive environment and that students and their families have the type of attitudes and capacities needed to deal with violence and other threats to safety.

Exhibit (cont.)

Six Interrelated Clusters of Enabling Activity*

IV. *Support for Transitions*

A variety of transitions concerns confront students and their families. A comprehensive focus on transitions requires planning, developing, and maintaining (a) programs to establish a welcoming and socially supportive school community, especially for new arrivals, (b) counseling and articulation programs to support grade-to-grade and school-to-school transitions, moving to and from special education, going to college, moving to post school living and work, and (c) programs for before and after-school and intersession to enrich learning and provide recreation in a safe environment. Anticipated outcomes are reduced alienation and increased positive attitudes and involvement related to school and various learning activities.

V. *Home Involvement in Schooling*

Work in this area includes (a) programs to address specific learning and support needs of adults in the home, such as ESL classes and mutual support groups, (b) programs to help those in the home meet their basic obligations to the student, such as instruction for parenting and for helping with schoolwork, (c) systems to improve communication about matters essential to the student and family, (d) programs to enhance the home-school connection and sense of community, (e) interventions to enhance participation in making decision that are essential to the student, (f) programs to enhance home support related to the student's basic learning and development, (g) interventions to mobilize those at home to problem solve related to student needs, and (h) intervention to elicit help (support, collaborations, and partnerships) from those at home with respect to meeting classroom, school, and community needs. The context for some of this activity may be a *parent center* (which may be part of a *Family Service Center* facility if one has been established at the site). Outcomes include indices of parent learning, student progress, and community enhancement specifically related to home involvement.

VI. *Community Outreach for Involvement and Support (including a focus on volunteers)*

Outreach to the community is to build linkages and collaborations, develop greater involvement in schooling, and enhance support for efforts to enable learning. Outreach is made to (1) public and private community agencies, universities, colleges, organizations, and facilities, (2) businesses and professional organizations and groups, and (3) volunteer service programs, organizations, and clubs. Activity includes (a) programs to recruit community involvement and support (e.g., linkages and integration with community health and social services; cadres of volunteers, mentors, and individuals with special expertise and resources; local businesses to adopt-a-school and provide resources, awards, incentives, and jobs; formal partnership arrangements), (b) systems and programs specifically designed to train, screen, and maintain volunteers (e.g., parents, college students, senior citizens, peer and cross-age tutors and counselors, and professionals-in-training to provide direct help for staff and students -- especially targeted students), (c) programs outreaching to hard to involve students and families (those who don't come to school regularly -- including truants and dropouts), and (d) programs to enhance community-school connections and sense of community (e.g., orientations, open houses, performances and cultural and sports events, festivals and celebrations, workshops and fairs). Outcomes include indices of community participation, student progress, and community enhancement.

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*Each of the six areas are delineated in greater detail in a set of self-study surveys that are available from the School Mental Health Project and its national Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA. The surveys can be accessed and downloaded from the internet -- http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu -- Click on Center Materials, go to II. Resource Aid Packets, and scroll to *Addressing Barriers to Learning: A set of Surveys to Map What a School Has and What it Needs.*

One of the primary and essential tasks a resource-oriented team undertakes is enumerating school and community programs and services that are in place to support students, families, and staff. A comprehensive form of "needs assessment" and "gap analysis" is generated as resource mapping is paired with surveys of the unmet needs of students, their families, and school staff. Analyses of what is available, effective, and needed provide a sound basis for formulating strategies to link with additional resources at other schools, district sites, and in the community and enhance use of existing resources. Such analyses also can guide efforts to improve cost-effectiveness. With respect to linkage with others, a resource-oriented team for a complex or family of schools (e.g., a high school and its feeders) provides a mechanism for analyses that can lead to strategies for cooperation and integration to enhance intervention effectiveness and garner economies of scale.

Where creation of "another team" is seen as a burden, existing teams can be asked to broaden their scope. At school sites, teams such as student support, study, or success teams, teacher assistance teams, site based management teams, and school crisis teams can extend their functions to encompass resource mapping, analyses, coordination, and enhancement. To do so, however, they must take great care to structure their agenda so that sufficient time is devoted to the additional tasks.

Although a resource-oriented team might be created solely around psychosocial programs, such a mechanism is meant to bring together representatives of all major programs and services supporting the instructional component (e.g., guidance counselors, school psychologists, nurses, social workers, attendance and dropout counselors, health educators, special education staff, after school program staff, bilingual and Title I program coordinators, health educators, safe and drug free school staff). This also includes representatives of any community agency that is significantly involved with schools. Beyond these "service" providers, such a team needs the energies and expertise of administrators, regular classroom teachers, non-certificated staff, parents, and older students.

Administrative Leader

In addition to a resource-oriented team, the model calls for administrative leadership. It is unlikely that a school can create, institutionalize, and foster ongoing renewal of a comprehensive approach to addressing barriers to learning without an administrator who has the time and competence to lead the way. Thus, one clear implication of a policy shift that embraces a component to address barriers to learning is to restructure administrative roles and functions. At many schools, this could involve assignment of an assistant principal to devote at least 50% time to oversight and development of an enabling component. The functions of this role include vision building and strategic planning for creating the component; facilitating ongoing program planning, implementation, and evaluation; and ensuring its integration with the instructional and management components. In most cases, the assigned administrator obviously will require a fair amount of on-the-job training to carry out these functions effectively.

Other major features of the Learning Supports component and the Urban Learning Center model in general are detailed in a series of guidebooks. These can be downloaded from the internet. Go to http://www.urbanlearning.org/ and click on *Guidebooks*.

Elizabeth Learning Center

One of the two original demonstration sites for the Urban Learning Center Model is the Elizabeth Learning Center (formerly the Elizabeth St. Elementary School). With the full commitment of the Los Angeles Unified School District's administration, the teacher's union, and a variety of community partners, the site has been transformed over a period of several years. The intensive commitment of the various partners is producing a "lifespan" focus -- ranging from pre-K through grade 12 and incorporating adult education.

The K-12 enrollment at Elizabeth Learning Center has increased to 2,800 -- with 2200 in K-8 and 600 in grades 9-12. Initial data indicate drop out rates have declined to 1.22% (compared to 5.28% in surrounding schools and a district-wide rate of 7.84%). Daily attendance averages 92%. Graduation rates for the first two cohorts of high schoolers were 100% and 98%, respectively, with the majority going on to post-secondary education. With respect to parent and community involvement, besides the 1,000 plus attending adult education classes from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m, local volunteers provide over 12,000 hours each year. Among the important effects of the adult education program is that with so many parents enrolled in English-as-a-second language courses, increasing numbers of students from Spanish speaking homes are entering the school speaking both languages. As a result, there has been less need for bilingual resources in the early grades.

Extensive progress has been made in designing the Elizabeth Learning Center. But there is much more to be done, and several critical expansions are just being developed. One encompasses broadening the nature and scope of adult education at the school and fostering vocational opportunities. (Early in the reform process the site developed a contract with the local community adult school and began offering ESL classes, pre-GED preparation, citizenship, computer literacy, and parenting and parent leadership training. Two parent cooperative child care centers already are operating day and evening to enable parents to attend.) Another area for ongoing growth involves programs to enhance *kindergarten readiness* (e.g., a Head Start program has just been added). Such additions should contribute in many ways to the educational mission.

Some Commonalities

Although the various initiatives reflect different starting points and local influences, they all are dealing with the same concerns, namely addressing barriers to student learning/development and promoting healthy development as key aspects of ensuring that ALL youngsters have an equal opportunity to succeed at school. In this respect, the venues in which the initiatives are taking place all serve a wide range of learners and are finding that the number of students most in need of extra and sometimes specialized assistance is increasing more rapidly than the population of students at large. As everyone knows, the educational task and responsibility for such youngsters is quite demanding. Thus, all the initiatives recognize that to accomplish this difficult educational mission they must reform and restructure education support programs, weave them together with community resources to evolve a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach that is results-oriented. They also stress the importance of enabling school success by building on strengths (resilience), fostering protective factors, and dealing directly with factors that can interfere with learning and development.

To appreciate common *systemic* implications of the various initiatives, the following discussion is organized around four topics: (1) vision and policy commitment, (2) leadership and infrastructure, (3) capacity building, and (4) systemic change processes.

Evolving Vision and Policy Commitment

expanding school reform to address barriers to student learning more effectively

Pioneering initiatives to reform education support programs are demonstrating that the vision and policy commitment for school reform must be expanded. They are showing that it is not enough to focus on improving curricula and instructional practices and on how schools are governed and resources are managed. Too many students continue to perform poorly despite such improvements. Indeed, in some schools, this is the case for the majority. For such students and such schools, the pioneering initiatives reflect a vision and the need for policy that expand school reform from its current two component emphasis to a three component model. The focus of this third component is on *enabling* learning by directly addressing barriers to learning. Such a focus is conceived as *essential* and *primary* to the success of students who currently are not benefitting from school reform initiatives.

evolving a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of interventions

Whatever this enabling component is called (e.g., enabling, learning supports, learner supports, education support programs, supportive learning environment, comprehensive student support system, etc.), the vision encompassed is that of a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of interventions to address barriers and promote healthy development. The continuum is envisioned as ranging from primary prevention and interventions for responding early after the onset of a problem through to interventions to address severe, pervasive, and/or chronic problems. Such a comprehensive and multifaceted approach is viewed as essential for strengthening the quality and caring nature of the school environment and the surrounding neighborhood.

At the school level, the vision calls for moving from categorical and discipline-focused activity to a highly circumscribed program focus. In essence, the delineated set of program areas are the "curricula" of an enabling component. While the number and names used to encapsulate the areas vary a bit, encompassed are activities to:

delineating a highly circumscribed set of program areas

- enhance regular classroom strategies in ways that improve instruction for students with mild-to-moderate behavior, learning, and emotional problems
- assist students and families as they negotiate the many school-relevant transitions
- increase home involvement in schools and schooling
- respond to and prevent crises
- facilitate student and family access to specialized services when necessary
- increase a reciprocal relationship between school and community with the intent of weaving resources together in ways that fill program gaps and enhance specific activity.

capitalizing on the interrelatedness of school feeder patterns

The vision also capitalizes on the interrelatedness of a feeder pattern of schools (those elementary and middle schools that feed into a given high school). The families in a neighborhood often have several children attending different schools in the feeder pattern simultaneously. Those who remain in a locale will have their children move through the feeder pattern over time. Through an articulated enabling component, such a feeder pattern (or "family" of schools) can address common barriers and pool resources. This results in economies of effort and scale and opens up new avenues for increasing effectiveness (e.g., enhanced opportunities for coordinating interventions, monitoring and addressing problems, providing professional and other stakeholder development, weaving school and community resources together, and developing a life span orientation to addressing barriers to learning).

elevating policy status

The various pioneering initiatives are demonstrating not only an expanded vision for school reform, but also the importance of elevating the policy status of an enabling component so that it has equal priority with the other two at every level (e.g., at each school, at the central office and at the school board, at county, state, and federal levels, at schools of education).

expanding the framework for accountability

Finally, the commitment of the initiatives to high standards and results also is clarifying the need for an expanded framework for accountability to encompass not only indicators of academic performance, but also measures of social and personal functioning and of effectiveness in addressing barriers to student learning. (see Appendix B).

Designated Leadership and Infrastructure Redesign

As indicated, the various initiatives envision moving from categorical and discipline-focused activity to a highly circumscribed program focus at each school. This delineation of an enabling component at the school level provides the foundation for clarifying the types of leadership and infrastructure redesign that must accompany efforts to reform and restructure education support programs. Of particular importance is an appreciation of what is involved in developing, maintaining, and enhancing such program activity and related functions. At each system level, new functions are emerging that require staff to adopt some new roles and functions and that call for enhanced involvement of parents, students, and other representatives from the community. The new functions also call for redeployment of existing resources, as well as finding new ones.

The various initiatives are demonstrating an evolving infrastructure of policy, organizational, and operational mechanisms at school, for multiple school sites, and system-wide levels. Such mechanisms provide oversight, leadership, resource development, and ongoing support. They offer the means for enhancing (a) decision making about resource allocation, (b) systematic and integrated planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of enabling activity, (c) outreach to create formal working relationships with community resources to bring some to a school and establish special linkages with others, and (d) efforts to upgrade and modern in ways that reflect the best intervention thinking and use of technology.

The progress of the various initiatives clearly reflects the degree to which policy makers and administrators are ensuring necessary leadership and infrastructure are in place, appropriately supported, and maintained. Moreover, the myriad of political and bureaucratic difficulties involved in pursuing major institutional changes (especially with limited financial resources) clearly make the systemic change process quite a bit less than straight-forward. As a result, infrastructure redesign is emerging in overlapping and spiraling phases.

As the initiatives that are in place at school sites underscore, a programmatic approach for addressing barriers to learning must coalesce at the local level. The school and its surrounding community are the logical focal point around which to build a multi-level organizational plan. (Moreover, primary emphasis on this level meshes nicely with contemporary restructuring views that stress increased school-based and neighborhood control.) From this perspective, infrastructure redesign is *conceived* from the locality outward.

The focus begins with school level mechanisms related to the component to address barriers to learning and teaching. Then, based on analyses of what is needed to facilitate and enhance school level efforts, mechanisms are conceived that enable groups or "families" of schools to work together where this increases efficiency and effectiveness and achieves economies of scale. Finally, ideas for redesigning system-wide mechanisms are based on what must be done centrally to support the work at each school and family of schools.

School Level Mechanisms

school-based Resource Coordinating Team

At school sites, the initiatives are establishing an organizational mechanism – usually a team – to focus specifically on resources. Such a school-based resource-oriented team (e.g., a *Resource Coordinating Team, School Coordinating Team)* provides on-site leadership for efforts to address barriers comprehensively and ensures the maintenance and improvement of a multifaceted and integrated approach (see accompanying materials provided by several initiatives). In the process, the group reduces fragmentation and enhances cost-efficacy of enabling activity by fostering coordinated and increasingly integrated use of resources.

administrative leader at the site

The initiatives have had mixed success in establishing an administrator whose job definition outlines the leadership role and functions necessary for developing a comprehensive approach for addressing barriers to learning. This is not a role for which most principals have time. The lack of a designated role for an *administrative leader* who has responsibility and accountability for an enabling component at a school is a serious deterrent to progress. Experience to date suggests it is imperative to establish a policy and restructure jobs to ensure there is a *site administrative leader* for the component. Such a role may be created by redefining a percentage (e.g., 50%) of a vice/assistant principal's day or, in schools that only have one administrator, the principal might delegate some administrative responsibilities to a coordinator (e.g., Title I coordinator or a Center coordinator at schools with a Center facility such as a Family or Parent Resource Center or a Health Center).

staff lead

At the same time, a *staff lead* can be identified from the cadre of line staff who have expertise with respect to addressing barriers to student learning. (In Memphis, each school is using a school counselor to handle some of the school-site leadership functions.)

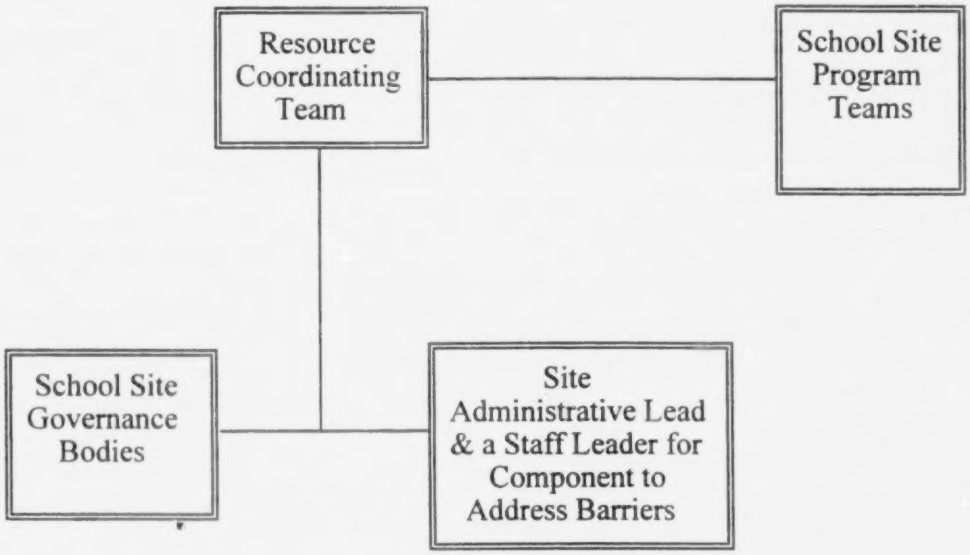
Both the designated administrative leader and the staff lead sit on the Resource Coordinating Team. The administrative leader then represents and advocates the team's recommendations whenever the administrative team meets, and both leaders also can be delegated to advocate for the team's recommendations at governance body meetings when decisions are made regarding programs and operations -- especially decisions about use of space, time, budget, and personnel. Besides facilitating the development of a potent component to address barriers to learning, both the administrative and staff lead play key roles in daily implementation, monitoring, and problem solving.

program teams

With respect to enhancing activity in each of the programmatic areas delineated above (e.g., the six areas that constitute the curricula of an enabling component), one initiative has conceived the necessary mechanisms in terms of *school-based program teams.* The functions of such teams is to ensure programmatic activity is well-planned, implemented, evaluated, maintained, and evolved. In forming such teams, a couple of motivated and competent individuals can lead the way in a particular program area -- with others recruited over time as necessary and/or interested. (Initially, some "teams" can consist of one individual.) In some instances, one team can address more than one programmatic area or may even serve more than one school.

Many schools, of course, are unable to simultaneously establish mechanisms to cover all programmatic areas. Such schools must establish priorities and plans for how they will phase in their restructuring efforts. The initial emphasis, of course, is on weaving together existing resources and developing program teams designed to meet the school's most pressing needs, such as enhancing programs to provide student and family assistance, crisis assistance and prevention, and ways to enhance how classrooms handle garden variety learning, behavior, and emotional problems.

School Level Infrastructure


Resource Coordinating Team
School Site Program Teams
School Site Governance Bodies
Site Administrative Lead & a Staff Leader for Component to Address Barriers

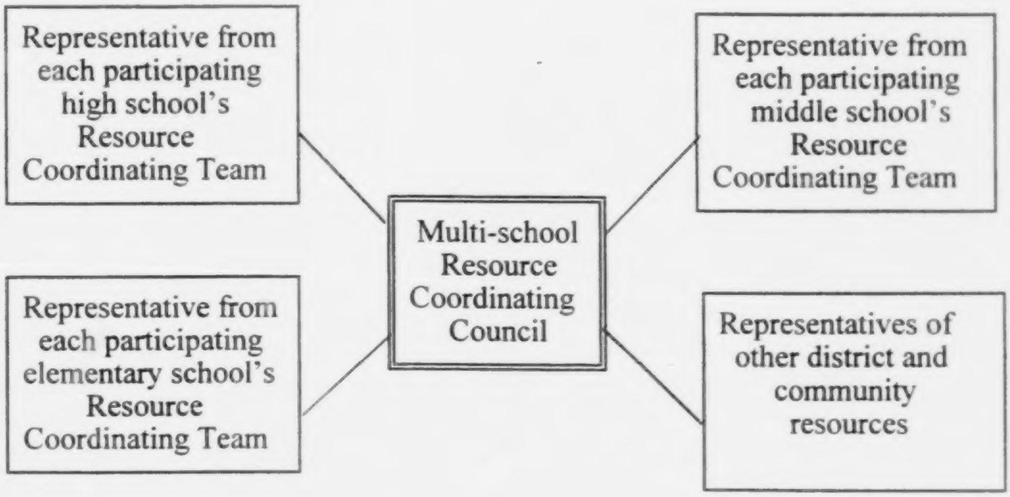
As will be evident on the following pages, conceptualization of the necessary school level infrastructure helps clarify what supportive mechanisms are needed at school complex-cluster and system-wide levels.

A Mechanism for a Cluster of Schools

To coalesce activity among a cluster or "family" of schools, several initiatives are developing a resource-oriented team (e.g., a multi-school *Resource Coordinating Council*). Such a mechanism helps ensure cohesive and equitable deployment of resources and also can enhance the pooling of resources to reduce costs. Specific functions can include: (a) coordinating and integrating programs serving multiple schools, (b) identifying and meeting common problems, (c) providing staff development, and (d) creating linkages and collaborations among schools and with community agencies. In this last regard, the group can play a special role in community outreach both to create formal working relationships and ensure that all participating schools have access to such resources. This can be particularly useful in linking with community resources (e.g., community agencies) which don't have the time or personnel to connect with each school individually. More generally, the group provides a useful mechanism for leadership, communication, maintenance, quality improvement, and ongoing development of a component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. Natural starting points for councils are the sharing of needs assessment, resource mapping, analyses, and recommendations for reform and restructuring. Specific areas of initial focus may be on such matters as addressing community-school violence and developing prevention programs and safe school plans.

The experience with such councils suggests that they are most useful if they are established after the school-based infrastructure is in place. In such cases, 1 to 2 representatives from each school's Resource Coordinating Team can be chosen to form a council and meet at least once a month and more frequently as necessary.

Multi-site Council


Representative from each participating high school's Resource Coordinating Team
Representative from each participating middle school's Resource Coordinating Team
Multi-school Resource Coordinating Council
Representative from each participating elementary school's Resource Coordinating Team
Representatives of other district and community resources

System-wide Mechanisms

As suggested above, the redesign of system-wide mechanisms should be based on a clear conception of how each supports school and cluster level activity. The initiatives underscore that three system-wide mechanisms seem essential in ensuring coherent oversight and leadership for developing, maintaining, and enhancing an enabling component.

a system-wide leader for the component

One is a *system-wide leader* with responsibility and accountability for the component (e.g., an associate superintendent). This leader's functions include (a) evolving the district-wide vision and strategic planning for an enabling component, (b) ensuring coordination and integration of enabling activity among groups of schools and system-wide, (c) establishing linkages and integrated collaboration among system-wide programs and with those operated by community, city, and county agencies, and (d) ensuring integration with instruction and management. The leader's functions also encompass evaluation, including determination of the equity in program delivery, quality improvement reviews of all mechanisms and procedures, and ascertaining results.

a system-wide leadership group
&
a system-wide resource coordinating body

Extrapolating from the various initiatives, two other mechanisms seem important at this level: (1) a *system-wide leadership group* and (2) *a resource coordinating body*. The former can provide expertise and leadership for the ongoing evolution of the component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching; the latter can provide guidance for operational coordination and integration across groups of schools.

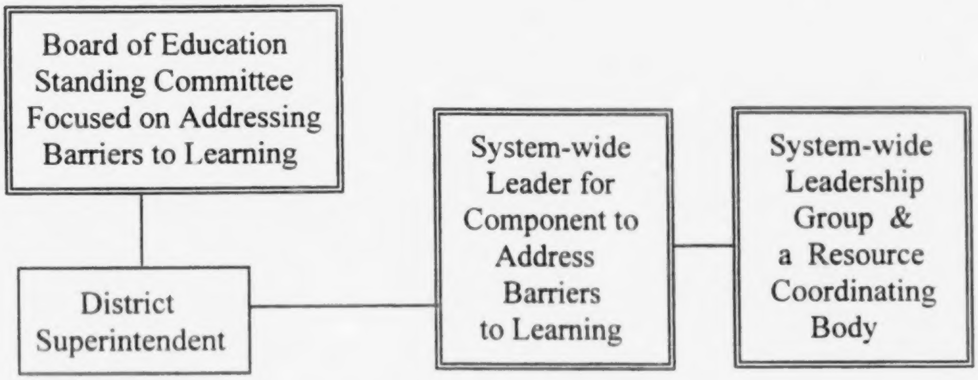
The composition for these two groups will have some overlap. The district-level coordinating body needs representatives of multi-school councils and unit heads and coordinators. The leadership group benefits from participation of (a) key district administrative and line staff with relevant expertise and vision, (b) district staff who can represent the perspectives of principals, union members, and various other stakeholders, and (c) nondistrict members whose job and expertise (e.g., public health, mental health, social services, recreation, juvenile justice, post secondary institutions) make them invaluable contributors to the tasks at hand.

Matters related to addressing barriers to learning and teaching appear regularly on every school board's agenda. The problem is that each item tends to be handled in an ad hoc manner, without sufficient attention to the "Big Picture." The piecemeal approach reflects the marginalized status of such functions and both creates and maintains the fragmented policies and practices that characterize efforts to address barriers.

Board of Education Standing Committee

One of the initiatives attempted to address this matter. Based on their experience, it is clear that school boards need to carefully analyze how they deal with matters related to addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development. Do they have a big picture perspective of how all these functions relate to each other? Does the current board structure and processes for reviewing these functions engender a thorough, cohesive approach to policy? Are the functions related to addressing barriers to learning distributed among administrative staff in ways that foster fragmentation? Where these matters need greater attention, the board should consider establishing a standing committee that focuses indepth and consistently on the topic of how schools in the district can enhance their efforts to improve instruction by addressing barriers in more cohesive and effective ways. (For further discussion of this topic, see our Center's policy report entitled: *Restructuring Boards of Education to Enhance Schools' Effectiveness in Addressing Barriers to Student Learning*).

System-wide Infrastructure


Board of Education Standing Committee Focused on Addressing Barriers to Learning
District Superintendent
System-wide Leader for Component to Address Barriers to Learning
System-wide Leadership Group & a Resource Coordinating Body

NOTE: While not the focus of the present report, it is clear that each of the initiatives has major implications for leadership and infrastructure redesign at the federal level and for the curricula of institutions of higher education that prepare practitioners and researchers who shape the field of education.

Well-Designed Capacity Building

It is evident from each of the initiatives that the magnitude of transformation that is involved calls for well-designed and appropriately financed capacity building -- especially inservice staff development. To date, much of the capacity building has been done on a shoestring. This makes what has been accomplished all the more remarkable. In the long run, however, decision makers must provide the necessary resources and institutions of higher education must make major modifications in their preservice curricula.

At this point, it should suffice simply to enumerate a few examples of capacity building needs that have been identified to date as a result of the reform initiatives.

In addition to the common considerations related to numbers of personnel, space, time, supplies and equipment, restructuring education support programs requires careful attention to:

- Redefining key administrative and staff roles and functions (e.g., delineating an administrative leader for an enabling component at all levels in the system; redefining the work of pupil service professionals)
- Translating the responsibilities into official job descriptions
- Training/retooling personnel for their new roles and functions
- Developing standards for an enabling component (see example in Appendix C)
- Identifying accountability indicators and developing appropriate data gathering systems (again see Appendix B)
- Providing sufficient support and training opportunities for other key stakeholder
- Developing strategies to orient and provide "catch-up" training for newcomers

Implementing Systemic Change in an Effective Manner

As with many systemic reforms, the current change process related to the various initiatives has not been well-financed and thus has experienced more problems than might have otherwise been the case. Thus, at this juncture, it is important to reemphasize that a critical mass of key stakeholders and their leadership must understand and commit to systemic changes. And, the commitment must be reflected in policy statements and creation of an infrastructure that ensures necessary leadership and resources and on-going capacity building.

Each of the pioneering initiatives is contributing to an enhanced understanding of the systemic change process specifically related to reforming and restructuring education support programs. Several also have demonstrated the value of establishing a special change agent role.*

Based on reports and participatory observations, the following is an overview of four phases covering fourteen major steps for planning, implementation, and evaluation of systemic change related to education support programs.

Phase 1: Creating Readiness

- Build interest and consensus for restructuring and developing a comprehensive, multifaceted, integrated approach (e.g., an enabling/learning support component)
- Introduce basic ideas to relevant groups of stakeholders
- Establish a policy framework -- the leadership groups at each level should establish a policy commitment making development of a comprehensive approach to addressing barriers to learning a primary and essential component of school reform
- Identify leaders for this component at the district level and at each school site (equivalent to the leaders for the instructional component) who have the responsibility and accountability for ensuring that policy commitments are carried out in a substantive manner

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*A cadre of *Organization Facilitators* provide a change agent mechanism that can assist in the development and maintenance of cluster councils and resource-oriented school teams (see Exhibit on next page). Such personnel also can help organize basic "interdisciplinary and cross training" to create the trust, knowledge, skills, and the attitudes essential for the kind of working relationships required if the mechanisms described above are to operate successfully. Through such training, each profession has the opportunity to clarify roles, activities, strengths, and accomplishments, and learn how to link with each other.

Exhibit
A Change Agent Mechanism: Organization Facilitators

Staff at all levels require assistance in establishing and maintaining an appropriate infrastructure for a component to address barriers to learning. Specially trained *Organization Facilitators* represent a mechanism that embodies the necessary expertise to help (a) develop essential school-based leadership, (b) establish program and coordinating teams and councils, and (c) clarify how to link up with community resources.

At the school level, one facilitator can rotate within a group of schools to phase-in an appropriate infrastructure over a period of a year. Then, that facilitator can move on to another group of schools. After moving on, the facilitator can return periodically to assist with maintenance, share new ideas for program development, help with such development, and contribute to related inservice. Work to date suggests that a relatively small cadre of Organization Facilitators could phase-in desired mechanisms throughout a relatively large district over a period of several years. Pupil service personnel who have been redeployed and trained for these positions adapt quite easily to the functions and report high levels of job satisfaction.

The following description of efforts related to developing an enabling component at a school should help clarify such a facilitator's role and functions.

- The Organization Facilitator's first step was to help policy makers understand the need to restructure the school's support programs and services. This led to adoption of the enabling component concept by the site's governance body and to an agreement about the role the Organization Facilitator would play in helping staff implement reforms.

- The process of restructuring began with assignment of an assistant principal to function as the component's administrative leader and establishment of a coordinating team consisting of the school's pupil service personnel, the administrative leader, the staff lead, and several teachers. As a focal point for restructuring, the Organization Facilitator helped the team map and analyze all school resources being used to address barriers to student learning. The six interrelated areas (described in this report as the "curricula" of an enabling component) provided a template to organize mapping and analyses, as did use of the set of self-study surveys developed for each area.

- By clustering existing activities into the six areas, the team was able to consider a new programmatic vision for the school's efforts to address barriers to learning and enhance healthy development. By analyzing activities from this perspective, the team identified essential activities, major programmatic gaps, redundant efforts, and several long-standing activities that were having little effect. Decisions were made to eliminate redundant and ineffective activity and redeploy the resources to strengthen essential programs and begin to fill gaps. As one facet of the school's community outreach, the Organization Facilitator trained staff how to bring community resources to the site in ways that do not displace essential school resources. This was accomplished by integrating the community as part of the enabling component -- linked each available community resource to one or more of the six areas either to fill a gap or enhance the school staffs' efforts by becoming part of an ongoing program. To ensure coordination and integration, all community agencies working at the site are asked to have a representative participate on the Resource Coordinating Team.

- Establish a system-wide steering group, a steering group at each school site, and a infrastructure to guide the process of change; provide all individuals involved in guiding the change process with leadership and change agent training

Phase 2: Initial Implementation

- Formulate specific plans for starting-up and phasing in the new approach
- Establish and train resource-oriented groups at each level -- beginning with school site Resource Coordinating Teams, then Cluster Resource Coordinating Councils, and finally a system-wide body
- Reorganize and cluster activity for addressing barriers to learning into a relatively delimited number of areas that are staffed in a cross disciplinary manner (for example, activity could be clustered into the six areas outlined for an enabling component with staff reassigned in ways that overlap areas)
- Create mechanisms for effective communication, sharing, and problem solving to ensure the new component is implemented effectively and is highly visible to all stakeholders
- Use cluster and system-wide resource coordinating groups to identify additional resources that might be redeployed from the school district, neighboring schools, and the community to fill program/service gaps; form partnerships as appropriate
- Establish a system for quality improvement

Phase 3: Institutionalization

- Develop plans for maintaining the new component (e.g., strategies for demonstrating results and institutionalizing the necessary leadership and infrastructure)
- Develop strategies for maintaining momentum and progress (e.g., ongoing advocacy and capacity building -- paying special attention to the problem of turnover and newcomers; systems for quality assurance and regular data reporting; ongoing formative evaluations to refine infrastructure and programs)

Phase 4: Ongoing Evolution

- Develop a plan to generate creative renewal (e.g., continue to expand restructuring to include all programs that address barriers to learning, including those designated as compensatory and special education)

Moving Forward

This report shares the work of pioneering initiatives around the country that are meeting the challenges of addressing persistent barriers to student learning and are doing so in ways designed to enhance healthy development. As a whole, they underscore a reality that too few school reformers have acted upon. Namely: *If our society truly means to provide the opportunity for all students to succeed at school, fundamental changes are needed so that schools and communities can effectively address barriers to development and learning.*

Policy makers are calling for higher standards and greater accountability for instruction, improved curricula, better teaching, increased discipline, reduced school violence, an end to social promotion, and more. At the same time, it is evident that current strategies for accomplishing all this are inadequate to the task. This is likely to remain the case as long as so little attention is paid to reforming and restructuring the ways schools address the many well-known factors interfering with the performance and learning of so many young people.

Adoption of an Enabling Component

As the initiatives highlight, the need is to move school reform from the prevailing two- to a three-component model, with the third component focused first and foremost on factors that interfere with learning and development. In doing so, the intent is to fully integrate all three components and to place development of an enabling component on a par in policy and practice with current reforms of the instructional and management components of schooling.

In addressing barriers to student learning, the focus is on both external and internal factors. In this respect, it should be stressed that a focus on addressing barriers to development and learning is not at odds with the "paradigm shift" that emphasizes strengths, resilience, assets, and protective factors. The value of promoting healthy development and primary prevention is both evident and in need of continuous advocacy. At the same time, it is clear that too many youngsters are growing up and going to school in situations that not only do not promote healthy development but are antithetical to the process. As a result, youngsters come to school unready to meet the demands effectively (not just when they first enroll, but at every grade level).

Efforts to enhance positive development and improve instruction clearly can improve readiness to learn. However, it is frequently the case that preventing problems also requires direct action to remove or at least minimize the impact of barriers, such as hostile environments and intrinsic problems. Without an effective, direct intervention, such barriers can continue to get in the way of development and learning -- despite the best efforts to facilitate development and provide instruction.

The concept of an enabling component embraces a focus on healthy development, prevention, and addressing barriers. Thus it is not a case of a negative vs. a positive emphasis (or excusing or blaming anyone). It's not about what's wrong vs. what's right with kids. It is about continuing to face up to the reality of major extrinsic barriers, as well as personal vulnerabilities and real disorders and disabilities.

In addressing barriers to student learning, the pioneering initiatives are improving school and classroom environments to prevent problems and enhance youngsters' strengths. At the same time, for those who need something more, school and community, working separately and together, provide essential supports and assistance.

Society has the responsibility to promote healthy development *and* address barriers.

Restructuring from the School Outward

In practice, an enabling component translates into a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of interventions which requires a melding school, community, and home resources. Current moves to devolve and decentralize control may or may not result in the necessary transformations. For schools and schooling, such changes do provide opportunities to reorient from "district-centric" planning and resource allocation. For too long there has been a terrible disconnect between central office policy and operations and how programs and services evolve in classrooms and schools. The time is opportune for schools and classrooms to truly become the center and guiding force for all planning. The pioneering initiatives are demonstrating that planning should begin with a clear image of what the classroom and school must do to teach all students effectively and enable learning by addressing barriers. Then, the focus moves to planning how a family of schools (e.g., a high school and its feeders) and the surrounding community can complement each other's efforts and achieve economies of scale. Central staff and state and national policy then are expected to restructure in ways that best support local efforts *as defined locally*.

The experiences of those who are revamping support programs also are highlighting a variety of other basic concerns about current practices, policy, and reforms. Extrapolating from the work done to date, greater attention is especially needed related to:

- ***Addressing barriers through a broader view of "basics" and through effective accommodation of learner differences.*** The curriculum in every classroom must emphasize acquisition of basic knowledge and skills. However, such basics must be understood to involve more than the three Rs and cognitive development. There are many essential areas of human development and functioning, and each contains "basics" that individuals need for success at school and in life. And, any individual may require special accommodation in one or more of these areas.

- ***Enhancing the focus on motivational considerations.*** Every classroom must incorporate a focus that appreciates the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in relation to learner readiness and ongoing involvement and that fosters intrinsic motivation as a basic outcome.

- ***Adding remediation as necessary, but only as necessary.*** Remedial procedures must be *added* to instructional programs for certain individuals, but only after appropriate nonremedial procedures for facilitating learning have been tried. Moreover, such procedures must be designed to build on strengths and must not supplant a continuing emphasis on promoting healthy development.

- ***Enhancing school-wide approaches.*** Beyond the classroom, schools must have policy, leadership, and mechanisms for school-wide programs to address barriers to learning and teaching. Some of this activity requires partnering with other schools, some requires weaving school and community resources together.
- ***Increasing policy cohesion and filling critical gaps.*** Relatedly, policymakers at all levels must revisit existing policy using the lens of addressing barriers to learning with the intent of both realigning enacted policy to foster cohesive practices and enacting new policies to fill critical gaps. However, given the realities of legislative bodies, additional mechanisms should be established quickly to facilitate appropriate blending of funds in pursuit of more comprehensive and multifaceted approaches for addressing barriers to learning and development and promoting healthy development.
- ***Expanding the framework for school accountability***. Besides focusing on high standards for academic performance, accountability must encompass all facets of a comprehensive and holistic approach to ensuring positive development and learning. Such expanded accountability incorporates high standards for learning related to social and personal functioning and for activity directly designed to address barriers to student learning. The former includes measures of social learning and behavior, character/values, civility, healthy and safe behavior, and other facets of youth development. The latter includes benchmark indicators such as increased attendance, reduced tardies, reduced misbehavior, less bullying and sexual harassment, increased family involvement with child and schooling, fewer referrals for specialized assistance, fewer referrals for special education, and fewer pregnancies, suspension, and dropouts.
- ***Improving scale-up efforts.*** After developing efficacious demonstrations of ways to reform education support programs, policymakers and administrators at all levels must be ready to pursue new and improved strategies in order to ensure substantive district-wide systemic changes.

Our Center hopes to continue to play a meaningful role in moving forward with the reform and restructuring of education support programs. As for the participants at the May 22nd summit, all indicated a desire to work more closely together to convey lessons learned, share data on progress, and provide technical assistance, training, and mutual support. Others already have indicated a desire to become part of this growing network. A listserv has been established as one direct linking mechanism. The work of the initiatives also should be available soon on their websites; other sharing strategies will be explored. All who receive this document, of course, are encouraged to copy and send it to superintendents, principals, school board members, and any others concerned about addressing barriers to learning.

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* The Executive Summary and the accompanying materials for this report can be downloaded from our website (http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu). Or the enclosed response form can be used to request hard copies. (It should be noted that the related costs are being underwritten by our Center and its funders.)

Clearly, there is ample direction for improving how schools address barriers to learning. The time for reform and restructuring student support resources is now. Unfortunately, too many policymakers and school professionals are caught up in the day-by-day pressures of their current roles and functions. Everyone is so busy "doing" that there is no time to introduce better ways. One is reminded of Winnie-the-Pooh who was always going down the stairs, bump, bump, bump, on his head behind Christopher Robin. He thinks it is the only way to go down stairs. Still, he reasons, there might be a better way if only he could stop bumping long enough to figure it out.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Summit Participants

Appendix B

Expanding the Framework for School Accountability

Appendix C

Example of Standards for an Enabling Component

Appendix A

Participants*

Summit on *Pioneer Initiatives to Reform Education Support Programs*

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Memphis City Schools, TN
- Barbara Jones, Associate Superintendent
- Jeane Chapman, Director

Detroit Public Schools, MI
- Harriet Kirk, Director
- Sandi Screen, Director
- Alfredine Wiley, Administrator
- Mary Duncan, Supervisor

Los Angeles Unified School District, CA
- Sally Coughlin, Asst. Superintendent*
- Arturo Valdez, Administrator

New American Schools Model -- Urban Learning Center, Elizabeth Learning Center
- Mary View Schneider (Learning Support/Enabling Component Lead – on leave)

STATES

Hawai'i Department of Education, Student Support Services Branch
- Robert Golden, Director
- Geri Ichimura, Administrator
- Gayle Ozawa, Specialist
- Caroline Wong, Specialist

Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Tom Kelly, Deputy Superintendent
- Andrew Griffin, Asst. Superintendent
- Marcia Riggers, Director

California Department of Education
- Kathy Lewis, Deputy Superintendent*
- Wade Brynelson, Asst. Superinetendent*
- Mary Weaver, Asst. Superintendent
- Paul Gussman, Administrator*
- Minta Palmer Brown, Administrator
- Roberta Peck, Consultant

Developmental Research and Programs (based in Washington State)
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- Michael Brown, Consultant

From the Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA
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Summit on Pioneer Efforts to Reform Student Support Services
Los Angeles, CA - May 22, 2000

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Los Angeles, CA - May 22, 2000

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*Indicates last minutes schedule conflicts that precluded attendance.

Appendix B

Expanding the Framework for School Accountability

*Everyone knows the importance of having data on **results.** Few would argue against being **accountable** for their actions and outcomes. But solving complex problems requires use of comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated interventions, and thus, the accountability framework also must be comprehensive, multifaceted and integrated.*

In the lead article of our Center's Winter 1998 issue, we asked whether accountability is becoming just another mantra. At the very least, it seems evident that the attempt to use accountability to drive reforms in the public sector is bearing bitter fruit.

As with many other efforts to push reforms forward, policy makers want a quick and easy recipe to use. Most of the discussion about accountability centers on making certain that program administrators and staff are held accountable. Little discussion wrestles with how to maximize the benefits (and minimize the negative effects) of accountability efforts. As a result, in too many instances the tail is wagging the dog, the dog is getting dizzy, and the public is not getting what it needs and wants.

School accountability is a good example of the problem. Policy makers want schools, teachers, and administrators (as well as students and their families) held accountable for higher academic achievement. As measured by what? As everyone involved in school reform knows, the only measure that really counts right now is achievement test scores. These tests drive school accountability, and what such tests measure has become the be-all and end-all of what is attended to by school reformers. This produces a growing disconnect between the realities of what it takes to improve academic performance and where many policy makers and school reformers are leading the public.

This disconnect is especially evident in schools serving what are now being referred to as "low wealth" families. Such families and those who work in schools serving them have a clear appreciation of many barriers to learning that must be addressed so students can benefit from classroom instruction. Parents and teachers stress that, in many schools, major academic improvements are unlikely until comprehensive and multifaceted programs/services to address these barriers are developed and pursued effectively. At the same time, it is evident to anyone who looks that there is no direct accountability for whether these barriers are addressed. To the contrary, when achievement test scores do not reflect an immediate impact for the investment, efforts essential for addressing barriers to development and learning often are devalued and cut.

Thus, rather than building the type of comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approach needed to enable improved academic performance, prevailing accountability measures pressure schools to maintain a narrow focus on strategies whose face validity suggests a direct route to improving performance. The implicit underlying assumption of most of these teaching strategies is that students are motivationally ready and able each day to benefit from the teacher's instructional efforts. The reality, of course, is that in too many schools the *majority* of youngsters are not motivationally ready and able and thus are not benefitting from the instructional refinements. For many students, the fact remains that there are a host of external interfering factors. Logically, well designed, systematic efforts should be directed at addressing such factors. However, accountability pressures override the logic and result in the marginalization of almost every initiative that is not seen as directly (and quickly) leading to academic gains.

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Ironically, not only does a restricted emphasis on achievement measures work against the logic of what needs to be done, it works against gathering evidence on how essential and effective it is to address barriers to learning directly. As long as school accountability ignores these concerns, it remains difficult to make an empirical case for school interventions that focus on interfering factors. This is not to say that it would be easy to show causal connections between such strategies and the immediate and direct results they are meant to produce (never mind showing the long-term, indirect outcomes that they hope to engender). As Lisabeth Schorr and Daniel Yankelovich warn in an op ed article entitled *What works to Better Society Can't Be Easily Measured:*

> . . . "Alas, insistence on irrefutable scientific proof of causal connections has become an obstacle to finding what works, frustrating the nation's hunger for evidence that social programs are on the right path. Ironically, the methods considered most scientific' can actually defeat thoughtful assessments of promising interventions.
>
> Why is this so? It is because scientific experiments are best equipped to study isolated interventions, whereas the most promising social programs don't consist of discrete, circumscribed pieces. . . .
>
> Many new approaches now are becoming available for evaluating whether complex programs work. What they lack in certainty they make up for in richness of understanding that builds over time and across initiatives. Quarrels over which method represents "the gold standard" make no more sense than arguing about whether hammers are superior to saws. . . ."

Properly designed and implemented, school accountability policies provide an important arena for pursuing the type of new evaluation approaches that are essential for demonstrating how important education support programs are to the success of school reform.

All this leads to an appreciation of the need for an expanded framework for school accountability. A framework that includes direct measures of achievement and much more. The figure on the next page highlights such an expanded framework.

Few would argue with the notion that ultimately school reform must be judged in terms of whether the academic performance of students improves significantly (approaching "high standards"). At the same time, it is essential that accountability encompasses all facets of a comprehensive and holistic approach to facilitate and enable development and learning. Such an approach comprises programs designed to achieve high standards for learning related to social and personal functioning and those designed to address barriers to student learning. Currently, efforts in these arenas are given short shrift because they are not part of the accountability framework. To be more specific, it is clear that concerns about social learning and behavior, character/values, civility, healthy and safe behavior, and other facets of youth development are not included when school accountability is discussed. Similarly, school programs/services designed to address barriers to student learning are not attended to in a major way in the prevailing accountability framework. We suggest that "getting from here to there" in improving academic performance also requires expanding the accountability framework to include high standards and related accountability for activity to enable learning and development by addressing barriers. Among the accountability indicators ("benchmarks") for such programs are increased attendance, reduced tardies, reduced misbehavior, less bullying and sexual harassment, increased family involvement with child and schooling, fewer referrals for specialized assistance, fewer referrals for special education, and fewer pregnancies, suspension, and dropouts.

Concern about the need to expand the accountability framework is being driven home through litigation. For example, in California the ACLU recently initiated a suit against the state to hold them accountable for the substandard conditions found in too many schools. As one of the lawyers states:

> "There is a whole lot of talk now about accountability in education. ... I think this is an excellent idea, But who is accountable to our students? The state has established and works through local school boards, but that is a political and legislative choice, not a constitutional

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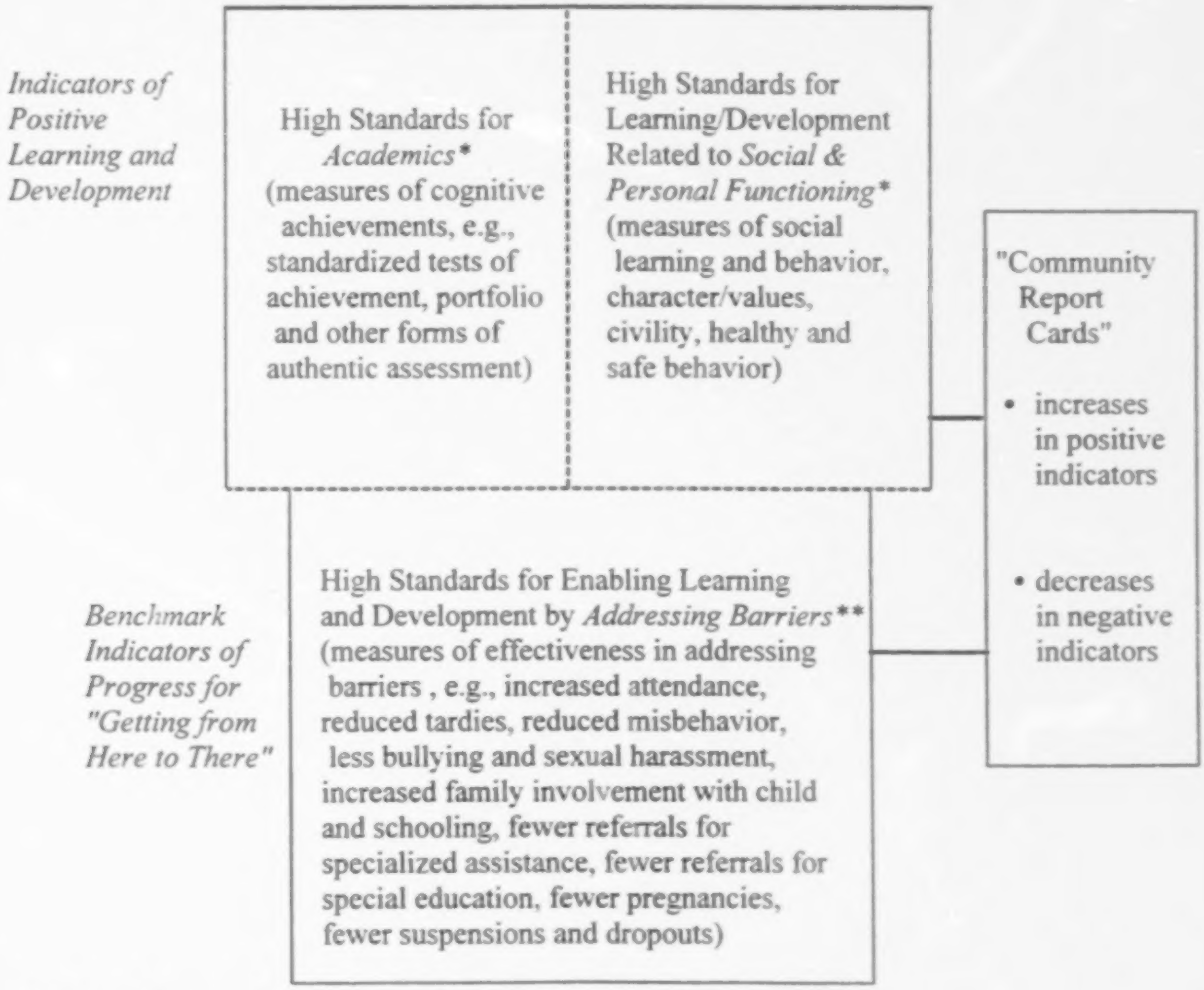
mandate. Under general state constitutional law, the buck stops with the governor, the superintendent of public instruction, and other state officials.

But in the daily reality of our schools, there is another answer to the question of who is accountable to our students: No one. The patchwork of laws and regulations that govern conditions in public schools is made up mainly of holes. . . . Public school students lack some of the same protections from slum conditions that tenants have had since 1919.

Where there are standards for schools, no one ever bothers to find out whether they are routinely violated. We regularly inspect workplaces, restaurants and apartment houses. No one inspects our public schools . . . . We desperately need accountability starting at the top."

(Gary Blasi, UCLA professor of law)

Expanding the Framework for School Accountability



Indicators of Positive Learning and Development

High Standards for *Academics** (measures of cognitive achievements, e.g., standardized tests of achievement, portfolio and other forms of authentic assessment)

High Standards for Learning/Development Related to *Social & Personal Functioning** (measures of social learning and behavior, character/values, civility, healthy and safe behavior)

Benchmark Indicators of Progress for "Getting from Here to There"

High Standards for Enabling Learning and Development by *Addressing Barriers*** (measures of effectiveness in addressing barriers , e.g., increased attendance, reduced tardies, reduced misbehavior, less bullying and sexual harassment, increased family involvement with child and schooling, fewer referrals for specialized assistance, fewer referrals for special education, fewer pregnancies, fewer suspensions and dropouts)

"Community Report Cards"

- increases in positive indicators
- decreases in negative indicators

*Results of interventions for directly facilitating development and learning.

**Results of interventions for addressing barriers to learning and development.

Appendix C

Example of Standards for an Enabling Component

STANDARDS FOR AN ENABLING OR LEARNER SUPPORT COMPONENT*

An *Enabling* or *Learner Support component* is an essential facet of a comprehensive school design. This component is intended to enable *all* students to benefit from instruction and achieve high and challenging academic standards. This is accomplished by providing a comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated continuum of support programs and services at every school. The district is committed to supporting and guiding capacity building to develop and sustain such a comprehensive approach in keeping with these standards.

All personnel in the district and other stakeholders should use the standards to guide development of such a component as an essential facet of school improvement efforts. In particular, the standards should guide decisions about direction and priorities for redesigning the infrastructure, resource allocation, redefining personnel roles and functions, stakeholder development, and specifying accountability indicators and criteria.

The following are 5 major standards for an effective Enabling or Learner Support component:

Standard 1. *The Enabling or Learner Support component encompasses an evolving range of research-based programs and services designed to enable student learning and well-being by addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development.*

Standard 2. *The Enabling or Learner Support Component is developed, coordinated, and fully integrated with all other facets of each school's comprehensive school improvement plan.*

Standard 3. *The Enabling or Learner Support Component draws on all relevant resources at a school, in a family of schools, district-wide, and in the home and community to ensure sufficient resources are mobilized for capacity building, implementation, filling gaps, and enhancing essential programs and services to enable student learning and well-being and strengthen families and neighborhoods.*

Standard 4. *Learning supports are applied in ways that promote use of the least restrictive and nonintrusive forms of intervention required to address problems and accommodate diversity.*

Standard 5. *The Enabling or Learner Support Component is evaluated with respect to its impact on enabling factors, as well as increased student achievement.*

Meeting these standards is a shared responsibility. District and school leaders, staff, and all other concerned stakeholders work together to identify learning support needs and how best to meet them. The district and schools provide necessary resources, implement policies and practices to encourage and support appropriate interventions, and continuously evaluate the quality and impact of the Enabling/Learner Support Component.

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*The material in this appendix is adapted from a set of standards, guidelines, and related quality indicators developed by the Memphis City Schools.

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Guidelines and Quality Indicators for Each Standard

Standard 1 encompasses a guideline emphasizing the necessity of having a full continuum of programs and services in order to ensure all students have an equal opportunity for success at school. Included are programs designed to promote and maintain safety, programs to promote and maintain physical and mental health, school readiness and early school-adjustment services, expansion of social and academic supports, interventions prior to referral for special services, and provisions to meet specialty needs.

Quality Indicators for Standard 1:

- All programs and services implemented are based on state of the art best practices for addressing barriers to learning and promoting positive development.
- The continuum of programs and services ranges from prevention and early-age intervention -- through responding to problems soon after onset -- to partnerships with the home and other agencies in meeting the special needs of those with severe, pervasive, or chronic problems.
- Routine procedures are in place to review the progress of the component's development and the fidelity of its implementation.

Standard 2 encompasses a guideline that programs and services should be evolved within a framework of delineated areas of activity (e.g., 5 or 6 major areas) that reflect basic functions schools must carry out in addressing barriers to student learning and promoting healthy development. A second guideline stresses that a school-based lead staff member and team should be in place to steer development of these areas at each school and ensure that all activities are implemented in an interdisciplinary well coordinated manner which ensures full integration into the instructional and management plan.

Quality Indicators for Standard 2:

- All programs/services are established with a delineated framework of areas of activity that reflect basic functions a school must have in place for addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development.
- At the school level, a resource-oriented team is functioning effectively as part of the school's infrastructure with responsibility for ensuring resources are deployed appropriately and used in a coordinated way. In addition, the team is facilitating (a) capacity building, (b) development, implementation, and evaluation of activity, and (c) full integration with all facets of the instructional and governance/management components.
- Routine procedures are in place to ensure all activities are implemented in a manner that coordinates them with each other and integrates them fully into the instructional and governance/management components.
- Ongoing professional development is (a) provided for all personnel implementing any aspect of the Enabling/Learner Support Component and (b) is developed and implemented in ways that are consistent with the district's Professional Development Standards.

Guidelines and Quality Indicators for Each Standard (cont.)

Standard 3 encompasses a guideline underscoring that necessary resources must be generated by redeploying current allocations and building collaborations that weave together, in common purpose, families of schools, centralized district assets, and various community entities.

Quality Indicators for Standard 3:

- Each school has mapped and analyzed the resources it allocates for learner support activity and routinely updates its mapping and analysis.
- All school resources for learner supports are allocated and redeployed based on careful analysis of cost-effectiveness.
- Collaborative arrangements for each family of schools are in place to (a) enhance effectiveness of learner supports and (b) achieve economies of scale.
- Centralized district assets are allocated in ways that directly aid capacity building and effective implementation of learner support programs and services at school sites and by families of schools.
- Collaborative arrangements are in place with a variety of community entities to (a) fill gaps in the Enabling/Learner Support Component, (b) enhance effectiveness, and (c) achieve economies of scale.

Standard 4 encompasses guidelines highlighting that enabling or learner support activity should be applied in all instances where there is need and should be implemented in ways that ensure needs are addressed appropriately, with as little disruption as feasible of a student's normal involvement at school.

Quality Indicators for Standard 4:

- Procedures are in routine use for gathering and reviewing information on the need for specific types of learner support activities and for establishing priorities for developing/implementing such activity.
- Whenever a need is identified, learner support is implemented in ways that ensure needs are addressed appropriately and with as little disruption as feasible of a student's normal involvement at school.
- Procedures are in routine use for gathering and reviewing data on how well needs are met; such data are used to inform decisions about capacity building, including infrastructure changes and personnel development.

Standard 5 encompasses a guideline for accountability that emphasizes a focus on the progress of students with respect to the direct enabling outcomes each program and service is designed to accomplish, as well as by enhanced academic achievement.

Quality Indicators for Standard 5:

- Accountability for the learner support activity focuses on the progress of students at a school site with respect to both the direct enabling outcomes a program/service is designed to accomplish (measures of effectiveness in addressing barriers, such as increased attendance, reduced tardies, reduced misbehavior, less bullying and sexual harassment, increased family involvement with child and schooling, fewer referrals for specialized assistance, fewer referrals for special education, fewer pregnancies, fewer suspensions, and dropouts), as well as academic achievement.
- All data are disaggregated to clarify impact as related to critical subgroup differences (e.g., pervasiveness, severity, and chronicity of identified problems).
- All data gathered on learner support activity are reviewed as a basis for decisions about how to enhance and renew the Enabling/Learner Support Component.